

STOPPING AT AN OVERLOOK:
READING CURRICULA, LITERACY COACHING,
AND READING ACHIEVEMENT
IN NORTH CAROLINA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

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Adolescent reading achievement is of grave concern in America as a persistent literacy achievement gap harms the intellectual potential of many American school children. The selection and implementation of approaches to reading curricula and professional development are relevant factors examined in this quantitative study. Using an ex post facto method, this study identifies the different reading curricula and coach-based professional development models in North Carolina school districts and examines their alignment with current best practices for curricula and professional development. A researcher-created survey was distributed to the 115 North Carolina curriculum directors with a 35% ($n = 40$) response rate. A researcher-created classification system was designed and used to determine which districts fit into three main models of curricula: balanced literacy, core-based, and unknown. The responding ($n = 11$) literacy coach-based districts were classified as using either a responsive or unknown model. The study found that the balanced literacy curricula model was associated with greater proficiency rate in reading achievement relative to the state average across a three-year period.

During the fifth grade year, districts using a balanced literacy approach experienced a three percentage point increase above the state average proficiency rate. A similar association of curricula on composite student achievement data for the sub group of “Economically Disadvantaged” students showed an increase of seven points as compared to the state’s proficiency rate. Recommendations for practice include aligning reading curricula and literacy coaching with best practice research. The study recommends continued research examining the impact of curricula choices on student achievement with particular focus on districts implementing literacy coach-based practices. Further examination is needed to understand the intricacies of how reading curricula selection and implementation may differ depending on districts’ reading philosophy and how curricula choices impact struggling readers and achievement.

CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Source of the Problem

A persistent literacy achievement gap is destroying the intellectual potential of many American school children. The International Reading Association found that six million American middle and high school students struggle as readers (Joftus, 2002). One in four adolescents struggles to find the main idea in a passage or to comprehend informational text (Kamil, 2003). More than 70% of America's adolescent readers need some form of remediation in order to become proficient readers (Biancarosa & Snow, 2008). African-American, Latino, and impoverished students are falling into the gap separating non-readers from readers (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003).

While the reading achievement gap starts in schools, it bleeds into other facets of society. Not only do struggles with literacy endanger students, they serve as harbingers of future struggles. One recent study found that "a correlation exists between the dropout and incarceration rates nationwide—68.1% of state prison inmates in 2003 did not have a high school diploma. Approximately one in three African-American and Native-American males are likely to go to prison during their lifetime" (Trubow et al., n.d., p. 28). According to *State of Emergency Addressing Gang Violence and the High School*, a report prepared for the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, researchers found the following:

During this transition between elementary and middle school...data shows the sharpest divide between minority and economically disadvantaged students' literacy and numeracy proficiencies and their more affluent white classmates. As chronic academic failure becomes commonplace in many school systems, the

behavioral patterns of truancy, dropout, violence, and gangs are established.

Rather than academic success and college, these alienated students face academic failure, joblessness, and incarceration and for some—even premature death; if something is not done. (p. 28)

Discrepancy in reading achievement starts early and accelerates over the course of a student's school experience (Trubow et al., n.d.). The reading expectations increase dramatically when students leave elementary school and enter middle school and face complex content-based, informational texts. If teachers do not intervene or teach reading strategies in content courses, adolescent students who enter middle school as unsteady readers soon become failing readers (Sturtevant, 2003). In the past, many middle school teachers were under the false impression that teaching a student to read was an elementary teacher's job. It is no wonder that a currently popular reading professional developer, Cris Tovani, titled her 2004 book aimed at secondary teachers *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?*.

With new awareness and specific professional development, teachers now understand that everyone shares this burden. This burden, however, is great. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading results indicate that more than 70% of the 8th graders scored below the proficient achievement level (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009). There is a real need to develop and build students' reading capacity during the primary and elementary years in order to prepare students to meet the reading challenges posed by heavy content and extensive curriculum requirements at the secondary level.

Roots of Reading Achievement Gap

Why are many of the nation's children failing to become readers? Different groups point to different causes of the persistent and growing achievement gap. Some critics point to the early exposure to media. According to Reinking and Wu (1990), students who are heavy television viewers, over three hours per day, suffer the greatest decline in reading ability. Other critics suggest that early and excessive exposure to pesticides through food and exposure to plastics affect students' reading achievement (Moulton & Petros, 2006). Other critics blame lower reading achievement scores on the insidious effects of poverty. Eamon (2002) found that households experiencing poverty provide a less cognitively stimulating environment indirectly associated with lower achievement scores. The impact of summer break for students from families with less disposable income can mean less access to libraries, bookstores, camps, and literate experiences (Neumann & Celano, 2001). Meanwhile, regardless of the cause, advocacy groups continue to call for solutions to address the reading achievement gap (International Reading Association, 2004; National Governors Association, 2005; National Reading Panel, 2000).

Reading Achievement Gap in North Carolina

As a former third grade classroom teacher in North Carolina, I remember the urgency I felt to ensure that all my students became readers. My principal's dire prediction particularly about my male students who were African-American still rings in my ears: "If they can't read when they leave third grade, their choices will be prison or death" (V. B. Dineen, personal communication, August 12, 2003). Helping students learn to read was not just the nice thing to do, it was the necessary thing. Essentially, 70% of

the students who reach nine years old and can not read will remain illiterate (Shaywitz, 2005).

The current achievement gap between student groups in North Carolina raises concerns. An early leader in large-scale assessment, North Carolina requires upper elementary public school students to take the End of Grade Reading Test. Created by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to measure reading achievement the test's developmental scale score depicts growth in reading achievement from year to year.

By the end of the 2009-2010 school year only 59% of third grade students and 63% of fifth grade students taking the End of Grade Reading test scored at or above Level III proficiency. While these numbers are not initially alarming, it is important to note that North Carolina's current minimum score for proficiency requires a performance that in fact only places students in the nation's 18th percentile (NCDPI, 2010).

The achievement gap is also glaring when comparing students of varying socio-economic status. The passage of the *No Child Left Behind of 2001* (P.L. 107-110) mandates that schools gather achievement data for different subgroups of students. Specifically, the mandate requires disaggregating achievement data for two subgroups: "Economically Disadvantaged" (ED) and "Not Economically Disadvantaged" (NED). The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) defines ED subgroup according to whether a student participates in a district's free and reduced lunch program, or National School Lunch Program. Participation is based on meeting federal poverty guidelines. For example, a four-member household, making \$28,655 would qualify for free lunch according to the United States Department of Agriculture 2009-2010

guidelines (NCDPI, 2010). In North Carolina achievement of these subgroups is reported as a composite of proficiency for third through eighth grades. In the 2009-2010 school year 57% of North Carolina's ED subgroup was proficient while 85% of the NED subgroup was proficient (NCDPI, 2010).

Role of Resources

Describing the achievement gap is only the first step towards bridging the distance. Determining where to focus resources and support is critical. Since the challenge of teaching reading and writing to adolescents has been called an "orphaned responsibility" (DeLeon, 2002, p. 3), the role of elementary reading curricula and teachers cannot be taken lightly. Selecting and implementing a reading curricula may have long term consequences and so it is important to determine what curricula are in place for students. The curricula that are used in classrooms matters. Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, and Rodriguez (2003) studied the impact of different teaching practices in urban, high-poverty classrooms and determined that when teachers use "active instruction encouraging higher-order thinking skills as opposed to passive responding to literacy activities [as found in packaged curricula], students reap significant reading growth" (p. 6).

The quality of teachers working with students also has a consequence and impacts learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The quality of instruction can be affected by various factors including opportunities for teachers to engage in job-embedded professional development. Studies of coach-based professional development models likewise indicate that student achievement can be predicted by the amount of coaching a teacher received (Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter, 2008). What are the resources that school

districts select to support teacher development? While instructional coaching has emerged as a potentially effective professional development approach, coaching has been referred to as a “practice in search of research” (Walpole, 2004, p. 1). Whether coaching remains a viable approach will partly depend on the efforts of the research community.

Rationale for Study

This quantitative study will determine what reading curricula and coach-based professional development models exist in North Carolina. The study will then analyze the differences among districts’ reading curricula and coaching models and the relationship of these variables to students’ reading achievement, and specifically focuses on students who fall into the ED subgroup.

Reading Curricula’s Role

Reading curricula have long been fodder for rhetorically heated debates, pitting groups of people against each other. Reading curricula methods and content are central to the *Great Debate* (Chall, 1967), the *Reading War* (Lemann, 1997), and now “...Reading Research War of the 2000s” (Scherer, 2004, p. 5). Curricula remain a battleground for many educators, politicians, policy makers, and researchers. As will follow in Chapter Two’s upcoming review of the literature, the history of reading curricula is fraught with conflict. Research also has played and continues to play a role by exerting influence.

Some critics suggest that districts make curricula choices based on “ideology over evidence” (Allington, 2002, p. 26). Some suggest that more emphasis needs to be placed on selecting curricula programs that have rigorous research elements as recommended by the National Reading Panel (2000). Others are concerned that thousands of schools receiving Reading First federal funds are blindly adopting commercial programs from an

unofficial approved vendor list without adequate consideration (Marzo, 2003). The decisions that districts make concerning curricula may matter more than educational leaders and policy makers know.

Teacher Quality's Role

Experts suggest that if schools want to increase their numbers of proficient readers they must first increase their numbers of proficient, quality teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teacher quality more heavily impacts student performance than race, socioeconomic class, or the actual school of the student. Children assigned for three years in a row to effective teachers who possessed adequate knowledge and teaching skills scored an average of 49 percentile points higher on a standardized reading assessment than children assigned to three years with ineffective teachers (Jordan, Mendro, & Weersinghe, 1997). It appears that socio-economically disadvantaged students benefit more than advantaged students from good teachers (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future 1996 report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, highlights the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement. A major premise of the study is that "What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn..." (p. 1). The best method for improving student achievement is improving the quality of instruction they receive (Gamoran, Porter, Smithson, & White, 1997; Sanders & Horn, 1998).

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future's 2000 report, *How Can We Ensure a Competent, Caring, and Qualified Teacher for Every Child?*, builds on this premise by suggesting that the single most effective way to increase student

achievement is to offer high-quality professional development for teachers. In fact, independent of raising teacher salaries, lowering student/teacher ratio, or increasing teacher experience, students showed more academic progress when teachers' own education was increased (Darling-Hammond, 2000). These findings suggest that school districts should carefully consider what forms of professional development are implemented.

Selecting A Professional Development Approach

Quality professional development has a role to play in developing quality teachers. It is clear that professional development is a critical ingredient in school and teacher improvement (Hill, 2007). In order to ensure a supply of competent, quality teachers, districts are investing money in quality professional development (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Interestingly, NCLB has also played an important role in funding professional development. The NCLB legislation states the following:

School districts shall use high-quality professional development and training in core content knowledge and effective instructional strategies, methods, and skills required to meet the NCLB teacher requirements. High-quality professional development shall be used with challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards in preparing students for the state assessments. (Sec. 2122)

While some school districts have argued in court that NCLB is an “unfunded mandate” (Pontiac v. Secretary of United States of Education, 2008) the law provides monies in the area of professional development. Through Title I of the *Elementary and*

Secondary Education Act, which requires low-performing schools to set aside 10% of their allocations for school-wide professional development, schools can locate funds to try new approaches. According to a report by the US Department of Education, in 2002-2003 the Title II legislation provided more than \$585 million of federal funding for professional development in states in order to help ensure a quality teacher in every room. For the following two years, Title II funding was still above \$500 million (US Department of Education, 2007). In 2010, President Obama's economic stimulus packages increased funds dramatically. In 2011, the Title I budget was over \$14.5 billion with \$3 billion set aside specifically for school improvement (New America Foundation, 2010).

However, despite funding and best intentions, reform and professional development models do not always gain traction in the schools. Educational reforms are not self-sustaining (Cuban, 1990). In fact, according to Elmore, Peterson, and McCarthy (1996), reform efforts often cannot penetrate the instructional core of the classroom. In the past, teachers were sent off-site to a workshop to focus on isolated topics hand-picked by principals or the imported experts. Teachers did enjoy the break from the daily grind and the time to talk to colleagues, but when they returned to school, the cumbersome training manual with new strategies would sit on a shelf to collect dust. Traditional forms of professional development are inadequate (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

Coach-based professional development. In 2001, the National Staff Development Council (NSCD) established clear standards for quality and effective professional learning which align with coach-based professional development, an innovative form of

professional development (Deussen & Riddle-Buly, 2006). The coaching model takes a different approach than the traditional “make and take,” one-shot workshops. A coach offers job-embedded support and works alongside a teacher to help a teacher implement new practices and sustain his/her instructional change. While there are various types of coaches examined in this study’s literature review, the data collection and analysis will focus on literacy coaching. A literacy coach is a professional developer who models best practices and provides resources to support teachers’ literacy practice development. Literacy coaches often work across all content areas, supporting and infusing best practices of reading instruction in order to boost students’ reading achievement. Literacy coaches are professionals who know their content area, have classroom experience, possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills, and know how to work effectively with adults (Frost & Bean, 2006; International Reading Association, 2004).

According to Shanklin (2006), director of the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse, a literacy coach is primarily engaged in job-embedded professional development to improve the quality of the teachers’ literacy instruction, promote student literacy, and support and retain beginning teachers. Unlike a reading specialist who works with students, a literacy coach “supports teachers in their daily work” (Dole, 2004, p. 462). This means that a literacy coach might guide a teacher on how to select appropriate texts for an instructional reading group, model a read-aloud, review test-taking strategies, assess student data, order resources, observe and offer feedback about a particular literacy activity, or help organize a teacher’s classroom library.

Call for more research. Recently, the International Reading Association (IRA) voiced concerns about the lack of tangible evidence connecting the work of coaches to

increases in student achievement. The *Standards for Literacy Coaches* acknowledges that there is a real absence of “studies and no systematic body of research—reporting on the direct link of literacy coaching to student learning” (International Reading Association [IRA], 2006, p. 2). Without clear links, the IRA and other coaching advocates fear that coaching, an innovative form of professional development will be tossed into the ubiquitous dust bin of educational fads.

One reason for this missing link is that the initial research examining the impact of literacy coaching has been almost exclusively qualitative. These ground-breaking studies, which capture diverse responses from participating teachers, describe the multifaceted roles of coaches but do not measure their impact on student achievement (Poglinco et al., 2003). The role and impact of a coach are ambiguous concepts to measure. Researchers have noted that “simply knowing that literacy coaches are in schools does not imply anything about how those individuals spend their time—there is a difference between being a coach and *doing coaching*” (Deussen et al., 2007, p. iii).

Likewise, knowing that a district has a coach-based professional development model in place may not tell the whole story. Different philosophies of coaching may alter the basic premise of a coaching model. With coaching initiatives sprouting across the country, it is important to consider how various models of coaching may impact teacher quality and the long-term impact on student achievement. As well as examining the particulars of a coaching model, it is important to consider what role reading curricula (methods and materials) may also play.

Selecting A Reading Curriculum Approach

Reading curricula selection and implementation is a significant focus of this study. As seen in the review of literature, conflict about reading curricula decisions takes place against a backdrop colored by philosophy, politics, profit, and passion. The curricula choices that a teacher, school, and district make represent an inherent educational philosophy. The educational researcher Edmundson (2004) theorizes that “policies are the articulation of someone’s hope for the way something should be, and they are revealed through various texts, practices and discourses that define and deliver those values” (p. 419). A school district can articulate an approach to teaching reading by the sole act of selecting a reading curriculum that aligns with the district’s philosophy.

North Carolina school districts follow NCDPI’s Standard Course of Study. This document covers all the content areas; the English Language Arts Objectives guides instructional decisions and the state’s achievement tests are aligned to these objectives. Beyond these requirements, school districts are able to select and purchase vastly different types of reading curricula.

A case of neighboring districts. One example of vastly different curricula approaches occurring in neighboring districts can be found in the central piedmont region of North Carolina. All of the schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are using a *core-based* reading program entitled *SRA/Open Court/Imagine It!*. According to one of the district’s literacy facilitator Roy (2010) “It is the core reading program used by all and it provides a balance of children's literature, phonics and skill based instruction” (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, ¶ 1). Discussed in further detail in Chapter Two, Open Court Reading is considered a core-based approach designed to teach reading in a

systematic, logical progression. It provides teachers with sequenced and scripted lessons and provides students with vocabulary-controlled, decodable texts aimed at increasing a reader's fluency. Students typically listen to one core story per week being read aloud by the teacher and then complete workbook activities based on the story's vocabulary, and may read supplementary themed, leveled, decodable books.

Meanwhile, neighboring Union County Public Schools adopted the *Reading and Writing Project*, a *balanced literacy* program created by Lucy Calkins at Columbia's Teachers College (Union County Public Schools, 2010). This approach provides teachers with pacing guides and lessons focusing on explicit comprehension instruction that students practice by reading in trade books matched to their own reading level. This balanced literacy approach emphasizes the use of Reading Workshop, and a daily large block of uninterrupted time for students to read, confer, and practice comprehension strategies in authentic trade books from leveled classroom libraries based on students' individual interest and reading ability (Calkins, 2001). Vocabulary and phonics instruction is differentiated and involves time for students to explore and practice basic phonics components or study science/social studies content words.

In conclusion, these two neighboring districts are committed to meeting the English Language Arts requirements, but they approach this challenge through different curricular approaches. Debate about district-level vs. state-level policies vs. national common standards aside, the questions arise as to whether other districts use different or similar approaches and to what degree varying curricula approaches impact student reading achievement.

Other influences on North Carolina's curricula. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) brought along new models for intervention with struggling readers such as Response to Intervention (RTI). This problem-solving approach is based on the idea that quality interventions matching student needs and formative assessment data focusing teaches' instructional interventions can help struggling readers. North Carolina's own version of RTI targets struggling learners in the primary years. RTI involves "providing high quality instruction matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions" (NCDPI, 2010, ¶ 2). The emphasis is on being proactive rather than being reactive in order to prevent student failure and involves placing students on "tiers" to indicate severity of needs. While RTI values differentiation and individualized instruction, the actual implementation of the program appears to be varied. Visiting one classroom RTI time might reveal intensive, small group instruction based on best practice interventions, while another room might have students simply engaged in more worksheets without individual guidance (B. E. Redden, personal communication, January 24, 2011).

One additional effort to support struggling students is the emergence of Reading Foundations, a curricular approach developed to help the small proportion of students who face persistent reading challenges associated with learning disabilities. Reading Foundation training is extensive and covers the principles of reading acquisition and the National Reading Panel's essential components of reading instruction (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) along with instructional techniques

for teachers. It also introduces teachers to a range of phonics-based commercial materials such as the Wilson Reading System, which is a teacher-directed, highly scripted and intense reading program for students with learning differences. A question arises as to whether teachers will implement Reading Foundation curricula for only the most struggling reader or if this highly directive curricula will become a daily part of every students' reading diet.

Research Gap in North Carolina

It is unclear how many different types of curricula models are being used in North Carolina's 115 school districts. While NCDPI is responsible for establishing curriculum standards for each subject area and provides teachers with pacing guides and resource materials to teach the English Language Arts Standard Course of Study, the state does not mandate one particular reading program. In other words, districts select and purchase their own curricula materials that they believe will help their teachers and students meet the state standards. The diversity of curricula present in North Carolina districts is unclear and, perhaps more importantly, it is unclear how, if at all, this potential variation impacts student reading achievement. In addition, it is unclear how many districts have coaching models and to what degree these professional development approaches may vary.

Study Purpose and Questions

School districts across North Carolina select reading curricula materials and initiate coaching programs to fulfill student and teacher needs. Across North Carolina's 115 school districts, therefore, students and teachers may be experiencing vastly different approaches to reading curricula and coaching. This study will answer six critical questions:

1. What are the different reading curricula models used in North Carolina's districts in third, fourth, and fifth grades?
2. What are the different literacy coaching models used in North Carolina's districts in third, fourth, and fifth grades?
3. To what extent do these models reflect best practices according to guidelines established by the International Reading Association, the National Reading Panel, and the Literacy Coach Clearinghouse?
4. Are there patterns in the type of reading curricula models and literacy coaching models that districts implement?
5. What associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and third, fourth, and fifth grade reading achievement trends in North Carolina over a four-year period?
6. What associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and achievement trends for the subgroup of "Economically Disadvantaged" students over a four-year period?

The data sources for this quantitative study included archival student achievement data and data from two researcher-created survey instruments. The instruments were an initial survey focused on reading curricula and an additional literacy coaching survey to follow up with respondents who indicated the presence of a coaching program. The archival achievement data were collected from the North Carolina School Report Card site.

The limitations of this study include the reality that no particular reading curricula are consistently implemented across all district and school sites. This study focused entirely on district level curricular and professional development decisions. It did not consider the impact of principals who may serve as inspiring instructional leaders or may function as distant and alienated building managers when it comes to implementing the curricula. In addition, the study inquired about the presence of particular coaching elements in order to determine a type of coaching program. It did not take into consideration the issue of individual coach efficacy and impact. Finally, the study relied on both the ability and willingness of curriculum directors to take time to describe potentially complex curricular and coaching models.

In conclusion, districts can select and implement a range of reading curricula and can invest professional development funds into coach-based models. This study seeks to identify the different types of reading curricula and coach-based models being implemented across the state and explores whether there are patterns or associations that exist concerning student achievement. This study provides the researcher and reader an opportunity to stop at an overlook and examine one state's reading and coaching landscape.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Two's review of literature is divided into two sections focusing on reading curricula and literacy coaching. Both sections provide historical overview of theories and research.

Early Reading Curricula and Reading Skirmishes

Reading instruction has provided fodder for heated debates across the centuries. During the initial colonial period, educators argued about materials and methods for teaching reading, including who should learn literacy in America's schoolhouses (Monaghan, 2005). Young women kept at home meticulously stitched the alphabet on samplers while wishing for more schooling opportunities (Earle, 1935). In the early 19th century, reading was a lightening rod as the Quaker North Carolina-born abolitionist, Levi Coffin, was chastised for teaching enslaved people to read during Sunday school (Landau, 2006).

In the 1830s the McGuffey Electric Reader was published and would be used widely in American schools. The Reader's religious and moralistic content paralleled the patriotic enthusiasm for the new nation; while teaching the alphabet and basic literacy, it aimed to inspire good citizenship (Smith, 1986). The series was built as one text per grade level and included articulation guides for mispronounced words, introduction of vowel sounds, and lots of repetition (Dewitz, Leahy, Jones, & Sullivan, 2010). The predecessor of the basal was born. Despite the usefulness of the leveled text in the one room schoolhouses, Horace Mann, in his 1842 report to the *Massachusetts Board of Education*, expressed his "disdain for the alphabetic-spelling approach" (Graves, Juel, Graves, & Dewitz, 2011, p.41).

Scientific findings and reading research entered the arena in the late 1880s, immediately shaping curricula. Researchers in Germany discovered that it took “less time to recognize a word than it did to recognize a series of unconnected letters” (Dewitz et al., 2010, p. 15). Instructional material publishers responded and soon the alphabetic focus evolved into more of a word focus. In addition, research suggesting that teachers’ approach needed to be more structured and systematic led to the development of manuals offering extensive instructions to guide the teacher and his or her interaction with the pupil. In the early 1900s, early reading series used the word “progressive” in their title to indicate the fact that the series was leveled and suitable for readers as they progressed. The basal was born (Dewitz et al.).

The basal text was developed to introduce readers to strictly controlled vocabularies with a few pictures serving as clues to the reader. While some basal reading programs did begin to include building block elements for comprehension, such as post reading questions and vocabulary exploration, the mode of instruction and the content continued to follow a more behaviorist approach which emphasized repetition and capturing correct responses (Dewitz et al., 2010). The basal was viewed as a stepping stone, or a method for imparting some basic skills, from which a reader would grow and develop.

The Elson Reader, later known as *Dick and Jane*, was published by Scott, Foresman, and Company in the early 1940s. In many ways this series was the quintessential example of the basal series with its use of “Look!” and “Run, run, run!” The repetitive use of sets of small, simple words was aimed at building a child’s decoding ability. The upper elementary basal text had more complicated fiction passages and less

repetition. Luke (1988) suggests that the prevailing reading research emphasized a method “...which showcased semantically, lexically, and syntactically controlled texts to teach children to read” (as cited in Dewitz et al., 2010, p.18). The instructional mode was teacher-directed with the teacher preparing students to read individual passages, the students reading silently, and then answering follow-up questions intermingled with decoding practice, skill building, and worksheets (Graves et al., 2011).

The Great Debate

Interestingly, an early phonics proponent, Rudolph Flesh, author of the 1955 *Why Johnny Can't Read*, criticized the basal as lacking a sufficient explicit phonics emphasis. Research corroborating this concern was found by Harvard researcher Jeanne Chall in her 1967 study, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. Her findings suggested that a focus on phonics, rather than a whole word approach, could indeed lead to more student success. The basal publishers listened to this research and responded by increasing their emphasis on phonics (Pearson, 2000). This “bottom up” approach established decoding as a primary objective and was later given the term *phonics-based*.

Now stressing phonics more than whole words, this “bottom up” approach became controversial in the 1970s in the context of the development of open classrooms and student-centered learning. The basal’s controlled vocabulary, artificial segmentation of words, and emphasis on white, middle-class families, was viewed as prescriptive and exclusive. In addition, a concern was raised about the abundance of practice sheets related to sub-skills lacking any clear alignment with the actual skills required of a strong reader. Critics of strictly phonics-based instruction also pointed to the reality that more than half of English words serve as an exception rather than an example of phonetic rules.

Concern was also expressed about the “over-programmed and over scripted” (Graves et al., 2011, p. 42) instructional model that the basal approach demanded from teachers. A call was issued for a more literature-based and *whole language* approach.

Whole language. Early whole language advocate Ken Goodman wrote passionately about the need for a more constructivist, “top down”, and whole language approach. This approach focused on individual students and their interests so that a teacher was tapping into a child’s innate motivation to learn to read rather than forcing memorization of word chunks and vowel sounds (Goodman, 1986). Reflecting on his understanding of how and why he developed a new approach to reading, Goodman (2000) wrote:

I was working toward my model of reading based on what I was learning from miscue research. Chomsky's characterization of reading brought things together for me. Readers were actively but tentatively constructing meaning, making predictions and inferences that were used in sampling the text to get to meanings. Miscues illuminated how readers made sense of the text. Reading was a psycholinguistic guessing game in which efficiency meant using minimal cues to get to meaning and proficiency was making sense of the text. (p.19)

Goodman identifies the role of the reader as one who makes meaning from a text, not simply decodes a series of words or sounds. This recognition is critical in the distinction between a phonics-based versus whole language curricular approach.

Advocates for a whole language view expressed concern that students needed to have access to authentic literature and to spend time reading, not merely practicing reading’s sub-skills. The whole language approach embraced student choice, free reading

time, emphasized teachers reading aloud, and disavowed the necessity of students reading only in books with carefully controlled, decodable vocabulary. The chorus of discontent about basals grew. The early 1980s witnessed an increase in “basal bashing” (Shannon, 1987). Publishers again changed course and began to include in basal texts more quality, multicultural literature reflective of all American school children. There was a loosening of the strictly controlled, leveled vocabulary and an integration of writing and other language art processes (Hoffman, McCarthey, Abbot, Christian, Corman, & Corry, 1994).

Phonics re-appears. Concurrently, the popular skills-based and mastery-learning approach was growing in popularity and would exert an influence on the basal readiness series. Pearson and Hamm (2005) indicate that the basal began to expand its reach into assessment materials by including numerous tools for assessing students’ progress. The criterion-referenced tests and multiple skill sheets could, in fact, assess more than 30 skills in one story unit (as cited in Dewitz et al., 2010). This thinking lent fuel to the idea that if a student’s reading progress could be measured and documented, than perhaps it could be accelerated. The dilemma of balancing a teacher’s need to assess and a reader’s need to develop habits of a life-long reader can be appreciated in this milieu of high stakes accountability. An examination by Durkin (1981) of the actual content of the basal series found that only six percent of the teacher manual focused on teacher instruction to guide students in how to understand or comprehend the texts. The majority of the manual, in fact, included directions and materials for the teacher to use while students read independently.

The move away from basal series towards a less structured, more student-centered reading environment was opposed on several grounds. Many critics were concerned by the apparent lack of structure and absence of a clear scope and sequence. They also questioned the underlying assumption that reading skills would naturally appear if students were exposed to rich, literate environments. The critics of the whole language approach voiced concerns that reading instruction was being left to chance.

Research as arsenal. The “Reading War” (Lemann, 1997), pitting the feuding phonics-based proponents and whole language proponents against one another, continued to escalate. Reading research was catapulted across enemy lines. On the one hand, research suggested that students at risk for reading failure benefited from explicit, systematic phonics instruction (Adams & Bruck, 1995; Ehri & Robbins, 1992). Advocates claimed that that the shift from systematic phonics-based instruction towards more constructivist whole language practices led to a decline in reading achievement (Sykes, 1995). Meanwhile, the whole language camp suggested that reading achievement issues more likely stemmed from issues of poverty and also from a drill and kill mentality that caused student disengagement (Reyhner, 2008).

In 1985, the Commission on Reading published its seminal piece, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, providing insight on how students read and what best-practice and research-based reading instruction might look like. The report did recommend the use of phonics “but with a caveat” (Scherer, 2004, p. 5). It recommended that phonics instruction be reserved for the early primary years, complete for most students before third grade. It recommended that students needed exposure to texts written in natural language and authentic material. The report also highlighted the need for less emphasis

on worksheets and finally asserted the need for students to spend more time reading and for teachers to spend more time modeling the reading process.

Despite this national study and apparent bridging of a divide, the feuding sides began to use data from national achievement rates as arsenal escalating the conflict. Each side pointed to the other as reason for American children's reading decline. Sadly, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, there has been little documented change in students' fourth grade reading achievement from 1992 to 2005. In the past 30 years, approximately 40% of the nation's fourth graders performed in the "below basic" category, while approximately 5% ranked in the "advanced" category at the other end of the distribution (Reyhner, 2008). With this staggering achievement gap as a backdrop, a new way needed to be forged. While both sides argued about which approach to pay allegiance to, an unacceptably large percentage of children continued to fail at reading (Wren, 2003).

A new approach to reading instruction was emerging that recognized the debate and dichotomy had outgrown their usefulness. This new approach relied on the premise that a beginning reader needs a healthy, balanced diet of both phonics instruction and enriching whole language instruction. A group of reading experts pointed to research suggesting that in fact at-risk students needed exposure and opportunities both to build their comprehension skills along side with decoding skills (Cunningham & Shagoury, 2005; Pinnell & Fountas, 1996). A solution was forming that might capitalize on the important aspects offered from both sides of the debate.

Balanced literacy emerges. The term balanced literacy can be found in numerous studies and papers. There are several definitions for *balanced literacy* but this study uses

Spiegel's: "balanced literacy is a decision making approach through which the teacher makes thoughtful choices each day about the best way to help each child become a better reader and writer" (1998, p. 114). A growing consensus suggests that balanced literacy may resolve the Reading Wars. A survey conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in 2000, found that "63% of elementary teachers believed that phonics should be taught directly and 89% believed that skills instruction should be combined with literature and language-rich activities" (as cited in Cowen, 2003, p. 1). As elementary teachers felt their way towards a balance, other reading researchers weighed in. This recognition of the need for inclusivity is echoed in Strickland's (1998) assertion that "[A]voiding instructional extremes is at the heart of providing a balanced program of reading instruction" (p. 52). Spiegel (1998) describes balanced literacy as an instructional approach that is built on solid research, not public reaction or false promises.

If balanced literacy is not a silver bullet, perhaps it is a dove carrying an olive branch between the warring sides. Regardless of the metaphor, it is important to understand how this approach works in a classroom for both the teacher and student. The appearance and design of a balanced literacy approach may vary according to implementation, but there are several key components that must be present. It is a multi-layered instructional approach that includes "extensive authentic reading and writing; use of semantic and syntactic contextual cues; self-monitoring and self-regulation; and practice in reading with fluency, speed, and accuracy" (International Reading Association, 2003, p. 2). In a balanced literacy classroom, daily reading occurs to, with, and by students.

The basic components of a balanced literacy approach include: read aloud, shared reading, independent reading, and guided reading (Pinnell & Fountas, 1996, 2006). The emphasis is on the student developing habits of a reader while teachers offer instruction about some of the skills that good readers master, including both the use of phonics knowledge and skills to decode and the use of comprehension strategies to make meaning. In order for students to develop into proficient, life-long readers, they need the following instructional opportunities: time to read; access to books that match their reading ability and interest; time for experiences with making words; authentic exposure to phonemic awareness and phonics activities; encouragement to connect what they know from their lives to a text; and blocks of uninterrupted explicit instruction of comprehension strategies (Calkins, 2001; Harvey & Goudvis, 2008).

Curricular models that allow teachers to maintain some autonomy in literature selection, methods, and materials have been found to yield higher results in reading comprehension (Wilson, Martens, & Poonam, 2005). Capturing the impact of balanced literacy on students, Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez (2003) studied the impact of different teaching practices in urban, high-poverty classrooms and determined that when teachers use “active instruction encouraging higher-order thinking skills as opposed to passive responding to literacy activities [as found in packaged curricula], students reap significant reading growth” (p. 6).

It must be noted that balanced literacy is not without its critics. Diehard phonics advocate Chester Finn suggests that whole language is now simply “wearing the fig leaf of balanced instruction” (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2000, p. 2). Diane Ravitch’s *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* (2010) includes a chapter on

the drama that unfolded in New York City's District 2, and later San Diego, as infamous Superintendent Alvarado mandated that teachers use balanced literacy. Ravitch (2010) describes, with apparent concern, what a balanced literacy classroom looks like.

Children engage in structured activities such as shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, word study, writing, and reading aloud. During this time the teacher functions as a facilitator, moving from group to group and conferring with students. Direct whole-class instruction is generally limited to a mini-lesson at the start of the literacy block. Each classroom has its own library with books for different reading levels; children participate in cooperative learning activities in classrooms decorated with student work. Each classroom typically has a rug, where the children sit together, interacting with each other and with the teacher. (p. 35)

Ravitch (2010) summarizes parent advocates' concern that the district was trying to mandate "constructivist" (p. 40) strategies. If a curriculum is mandated to what degree does that requirement erode a teacher's right to independent pedagogy?

Recent Federal Initiatives Influencing Reading Curricula

National Reading Panel Findings

In 1997, Congress formed the National Reading Panel (NRP) to conduct a meta-analysis of reading research to determine the most effective forms of reading instruction. The 2000 report, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and its Implications for Reading Instruction*, was published and widely disseminated by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). The National Panel Report identified five major

components for reading instruction including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These were identified as the essential components of reading instruction (ECRI). The term scientific-based reading instruction (SBRI) was also established as well as scientifically-based reading research. According to the NRP the definition for scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) is:

[r]esearch that (A) applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties; and (B) includes research that (i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment; (ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; (iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and (iv) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review. (Section 1208)

Reading First

After the NRP report was issued, a significant amount of federal dollars was tapped to fund new reading initiatives. Reading First was a federal grant program authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act and administered by the U.S. Department of Education with the goal of “putting proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms” (US Department of Education, 2009, ¶ 1). More than \$21 million dollars was set aside to fund states’ efforts to help every child read by third grade using curricula materials that were based on SBRR’s five components. Schools using

federal funds were required to adopt reading programs that were “based on [SBRR]” as opposed to reading programs that have established their own SBRR base (Section 1202). The term *scientifically-based reading instruction* (SBRI) would later become a popular catch phrase used to differentiate reading curricula products that met or did not meet a particular standard set by the NRP.

Many proponents for phonics-based reading programs pointed to what they perceived as the primacy of phonics in the NRP’s report as evidence of their final victory in the aforementioned Reading Wars. The NRP agreed that a balanced literacy approach must include attention to phonics, particularly in the primary years. However, the NRP’s findings also included support for a balanced literacy stance which would integrate the strengths of both phonics and whole language approaches (Garan, 2002). Literacy experts such as Pinnell and Fountas (2006) pointed to how the balanced literacy approach can include all aspects of literacy, including reading, vocabulary, writing, speaking, spelling, and grammar. However, support for the balanced literacy approach was absent in the official summary, *Put Reading First*, and lacking as an element in the funding decisions for Reading First grants to school districts (Reyhner, 2008).

While reading experts may disagree as to what degree the analysis was scientifically rigorous or biased, the NRP’s two-volume report firmly stated that reading instruction must focus on ECRI and SBRI, guiding textbook companies to re-envision their instructional and curricular approach to reading (Allington, 2002). The basal series transformed again and became a core-based approach.

Core-based programs. The Reading First funding requirement that “state educational agency will assist local agencies in identifying instructional materials,

programs, strategies, and approaches based on scientifically-based reading research, including early intervention and reading remediation materials, programs, and approaches” (NCLB, 2001, Sect. 1023 b), led to the creation of a list of recommended commercial reading programs. Particular curriculum companies and products emphasizing the National Reading Panel’s decoding and phonemic awareness received more attention, as well as state contracts, by advertising their particular alignment with the federal government’s Reading First initiative. This practice led to criminal investigations into potential unequal distribution of contracts and conflicts of interest between members of the National Reading Panel and members of the Reading First selection committee, and textbook companies (Grunwald, 2006).

The 2,000 schools that received federal funding through Reading First adopted similar commercial reading programs emphasizing phonics instruction from the approved SBRI reading programs (Manzo, 2003). It is important to understand that this federal initiative served as a catalyst to transform the basal text into today’s familiar core-based program.

Core-based reading programs stand in contrast to the basal. The core-based reading programs come with themed stories, teacher guide books, and worksheets supplements, similar to the basal. They also come with assessment materials, progress monitoring materials, and leveled decodable student readers, also similar to the basal. The difference is that the core-based program comes with an expectation that the program will cover all of a reader’s needs. “The change in terminology was significant...; core conveys the idea that these published programs are the reading curriculum, encompassing the entirety of reading instruction” (Graves et al., 2011, p. 44). While the basal was

intended to support the basic needs of a reader, the core-based program is sold as a one-box solution.

Research on core-based curricula. What is the impact of the core-based reading programs? The standardization of curricula programs that meet the NRP's scientifically-based reading instruction requirement can be viewed in different lights. Proponents of directive teaching methods and accompanying curricula materials suggest that providing a systematic, scripted teaching approach can ease the burden on teachers' instructional planning time and give novice teachers a dependable framework with teaching scripts that attend to the different reading levels in a classroom. Materials that are arranged along a predictable scope and sequence may reduce teacher preparation time and frustration. According to Moustafa and Land (2002) core-based reading programs include increasingly scripted curriculum materials that require the teacher to read from a script while delivering the lesson. These scripted materials are viewed as explicit, direct, systematic skills instruction and a possible way to increase students' reading scores, particularly students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and to provide some support for beginning teachers (Coles, 2002; Dewitz et al., 2010).

Another perspective is that the core-based programs de-emphasize comprehension skills and emphasize round-robin, reciting and decoding exercises (Shannon & Edmondson, 2005). Some concern has been raised that that prescriptive packaged reading programs "de-skill" teachers and alienate them from their own teaching practices (Coles, 2001; Rice, 2006). This process can lead to teachers treating the teaching of reading as merely "the application of commercial materials" (Duncan-Owens, 2009, p. 27) rather than a teaching of students and books.

In Reading First coaches are funded to support teachers as they implement core-based programs. Teachers across California affectionately called the coaches, who were part of the Reading First initiative, the “Open Court police” (R. Jablonski-Liu, personal communication, August 12, 2007). Stories of coaches checking to make sure that teachers were literally all on the same page in the core series in a given day are not fabricated. According to teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District, the school system determined that “deviation from the program is grounds for discipline” (Sides, 2005, p. 2).

Oakes et al. (2002) warn that when districts reach for teacher-proof curricula to backfill and make up for “the shortcomings of unprepared teachers, [this action] will diminish the capacity of the teaching force for years to come” (p. 228). The need for teacher knowledge and quality is not, therefore, substituted by purchasing a core-based reading program. For example, Piasta et al. (2009) found that students’ growth was not related simply to their performance on decoding but to a teacher’s knowledge of decoding instruction.

In other words, teacher knowledge and quality are still important. A core-based comprehensive commercial product cannot solely teach a child to decode and comprehend, much less bridge the achievement gap. Dewitz et al. (2010) emphasize that the contents of the box cannot meet all of readers’ needs, “Although it is a valuable tool, especially if you are a new teacher, there are instructional decisions that underlie and enhance a core reading program” (p. 218). These include teachers making decisions about how to create interesting spaces in the classroom for group reading time and classroom libraries, and about how to engage students in worthwhile tasks during extensive 90 to

120 minute reading blocks. Giving students book choices, time to collaborate with peers and to experience real challenge, are important best practice elements of reading curricula that districts can consider incorporating along with a core-based reading program.

Best Practices

It is important to step back and see that amidst the arguments there are several basic elements that different curricula approaches can agree on. While a debate continues about the sequence and depth different literacy skills require, there is agreement that there are five essential components of reading instruction which include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000). Teachers must use student data to inform instruction. Students need to be exposed to a wide variety of texts. And students need to be actively engaged in learning.

Scherer (2004) suggests that “the reading wars of the 1990s [have] turned into the Reading Research War of the 2000s” (p. 5). On the one hand, reading experts Keene and Zimmerman (1997) brought “proficient reader research” to life as they summarized efforts from the 1980s research on the cognitive strategies that proficient readers use to interpret and comprehend new texts. Looking at a proficient reader, these educational researchers determined that in fact good readers consistently use six strategies known as making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, determining importance, and synthesizing.

Proficient reader research lends a foundation and structure upon which current best practice reading instruction is delivered. The teacher’s role is to teach explicitly each comprehension strategy by modeling and sharing the metacognitive conversation that good readers have running in their heads. This approach stands in sharp contrast to the

past roles of reader or instructor. Many adults remember being in school and answering the rote questions at the conclusion of the chapter to demonstrate their comprehension. These were, in fact, recall exercises, not requiring any comprehension. Allington (2001) suggests that educators and parents have confused the idea of remembering with understanding.

Many teachers now agree with findings of proficient reading research that a reader's primary purpose is to comprehend by using schema, making connections to the text, monitoring, and asking questions. Reading experts Harvey and Goudvis (2000) put it aptly: "If the purpose of reading is anything other than understanding, why read at all?" (p.6). Even more significantly, many teachers recognize reading comprehension is something that must be explicitly taught for the many students for whom it does not occur spontaneously (Reutzel & Cooter, 1999). This new appreciation of how challenging comprehension is for some readers has led to an explosion of ideas about teaching students how to use different strategies and how to monitor their own success in comprehending what they read. Proficient reading research suggests that some students need to be exposed to explicit comprehension and strategy lessons (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997).

A call was issued to develop programs that would teach children both how to comprehend and how to read (i.e., decode). Before the next iteration of the basal was taken to press, a "watershed moment in the history of reading instruction" (Dudley-Marling, 2005, p. 272) occurred. A government-funded reading panel's findings guided the design and content for the next generation of the basal.

Conflict is inevitable, but outright war between reading methods is unproductive; it does not help teachers develop more assessment driven, individualized instruction strategies which can help to close the reading achievement gap (Wren, 2003). It is also important to recognize that the search for a perfect method for teaching reading is too simplistic and sets up a misplaced assumption about the role of teachers and their interactions with curricula and with students. According to Duffy and Hoffman (1999):

The perfect method concept promotes the idea that good teachers simply follow directions. Who will be attracted to teaching as a lifelong career if problem solving and reflective action are replaced by such procedural compliance? In sum, the perfect method concept is not a solution. The solution is development of teachers who know a variety of methods and approaches, and who orchestrate those thoughtfully and adaptively according to their students' needs. (p.13)

Therefore, the implementation of reading curriculum and efforts to reform instructional practices can succeed only if improvements give attention to “developing teamwork, real-time professional learning, and system and school cultures that allow new ideas and practices to flourish” (Sparks, 2009, p. 515). This is where schools need to consider not only effective reading curricula but also the use of effective professional development models.

Literacy Coaching

The effectiveness of any commercial reading program may rest on one critical factor: teacher quality, not the program quality (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Pressley et al., 2001). Researchers agree that professional development is a critical ingredient in school

and teacher improvement (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Guskey, 1998; Hill, 2007; Killion, 1999).

Need for Professional Development

One possible solution to close the reading achievement gap is to improve the quality of teachers. There are several key ways to accomplish this. A potential “to-do” list for improving our nation’s pool of teacher candidates is found in a 10-year old government report, *Promising Practices*. The suggestions include increasing teachers’ salaries to attract capable candidates, strengthening the profession’s license requirements, revamping teacher preparation programs, infusing induction programs with best practices, and improving professional development practices (US Department of Education, 1998). If professional development opportunities impact teacher quality, do all teachers have access to high-quality professional development? The short answer is no.

Current status of professional development. A 2009 study by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) details how our nation’s schools suffer from “poorly conceived and deeply flawed” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 2) professional development. More than 3 million teachers attend some form of professional development during a year. The majority of these teachers do not engage in workshops or seminars that bring real professional growth. Research by Garet et al. (2001) support the assertion about the lack of adequate professional development experiences. In summary, the content of professional development is often made up of “brief and incoherent activities” (Taylor, 2008, p. 18).

Professional development is often short-sighted, poorly planned, and ill-conceived. In fact, the report found that 57% of teachers received no more than 16 hours, or two days, of development over the course of 12 months, falling short of the recommended 50 hours to improve their skills and student learning in a content area (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Earlier studies support the need for more time committed to increasing teachers' effectiveness. Professional development that runs for only 14 hours does not tend to impact teachers' instructional practices or student learning. But when professional development is stretched across a year with more than 30-100 hours of face to face interactions, significant impact on student learning occurs (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

NCLB support for professional development. Currently, NCLB legislation requires a certain amount of money and time be spent on professional development, but how does it compare to the aforementioned recommendations regarding time? A recent study examining NCLB implementation found that 80% of teachers reported dedicating themselves to 24 hours of reading professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2007) over the course of a year. Professional development and reading experts express concern that this amount of time is not sufficient for increasing teachers' content knowledge or affecting teachers' pedagogy (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Fletcher & vLyon, 1998; Foorman & Moats 2004).

According to Hirsh and Killion (2007), high-quality, research-based, effective professional development must be part of the solution to build teacher capacity. Again, research from the National Council of Staff Development informs us that professional development that is "sustained and intensive" and offers 30 to 100 contact hours,

improves teacher quality, and increases student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 9). Job-embedded coaching models can facilitate the sustained and intensive approach.

Coaching, an Effective Professional Development Model

The definition and responsibilities of coaches have morphed across the last quarter century and are not to be confused with that of mentors. Mentors are experienced classroom teachers who offer supportive guidance to assigned novice teachers and continue to meet their own classroom-based responsibilities. Coaches, however, are exemplary or master teachers who are released from the classroom, who step into the position of staff developer (Center for Strengthening the Teacher Profession, 2007).

School districts across the country have embraced and expanded on the concept of coaching to the point that school budgets include funds for hiring coaching personnel, professional development organizations create coach certificate programs, and coaches host their own conferences adding to the national conversation about educational reform. The Center on Educational Policy found that more than 60% of the nation's school districts placed their "distinguished teachers" in schools to inspire and support teacher development and student achievement (2006). The sprouting of coach initiatives across the country demonstrates an initial embrace of coaching. In summary, "[c]oaching at its best is focused on authentic student work, is closely tied to a specific school or district curriculum and to teacher's practice, takes place on a continuous basis, and relies heavily on research" (Russo, 2004, p. 2).

Definition of coach. Before examining further findings, it is important to define the key aspects of coaching. Admittedly, one of the challenges of research in the

educational arena is dealing with semantics. Deussen et al. (2007) report that “the term ‘coach’ is used to describe many different configurations: fulltime coaches to a single building, full-time coaches responsible for two or more buildings, part time coaches (especially in small schools), and teachers who provide part-time peer coaching to their colleagues” (p. 6).

Joyce and Showers (2002) suggest that coaches empower teachers to make effective decisions by playing the “guide on the side,” offering teachers feedback and a chance to reflect on their own practice. A coach “supports teachers in their daily work” (Dole, 2004, p. 462) by collaboratively planning lessons, modeling lessons, solving problems, and reflecting on teacher practice. Teachers often complain of the isolating nature of the classroom and their desire to have time to reflect and talk with one another. A coach helps to meet this desire as she/he offers a sounding board whose critical perspective and resources can deepen and strengthen a teacher’s practice.

A coach works in a collaborative, non-evaluative partnership with one or more teachers. A coach may also use his/her collaborative relationship with principals, specialists, and other para-educators to support instructional improvement in a school. Based on studies of coaching for the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Toll (2004) concluded that the most important element in defining coaching is to distinguish “coaches” from “supervisors.” A coach is “one who helps teachers to recognize what they know and can do, assists teachers as they strengthen their ability to make more effective use of what they know and do, and supports teachers as they learn more and do more” (p. 5). A supervisor, on the contrary, is an authority figure who is responsible for evaluating the teacher and often is not perceived as an ally. Rather than

evaluate and supervise, coaches conduct study groups, collaborate with teachers, and encourage teachers to reflect on their instructional choices (Donnelly et al., 2005).

Kinds of coaches. While the focus of this particular study is on literacy coaches, it is important to understand that different types of coaching are cited in the literature, including peer coach, cognitive coach, reading coach, change coach, and instructional coach. A peer coach is an informal, collegial arrangement in which peers may co-plan lessons, observe one another, and offer critical feedback. A cognitive coach refers to a method of supervisor/peer coaching that is “a set of strategies, a way of thinking and a way of working that invites self and others to shape and reshape their thinking and problem solving capacities...enabl[ing] people to modify their capacity to modify themselves” (Costa & Garmston, 1998, p. 1).

A reading coach is a professional developer focused primarily on reading instruction and reading achievement. The term reading coach is also associated with the federal government’s Reading First Grants that provide resources and professional development to elementary schools in order to raise primary students’ reading capacity. A literacy coach has a similar definition but is not aligned with one particular form of reading program.

According to the Center for Strengthening the Teacher Profession (2007), one distinction that has arisen is the term “change” coach vs. “instructional” coach. A change coach has the entire school organization as his/her focus and may work with issues related to allocation of resources and invest time in coaching administrators on decisions that impact school reform. An instructional coach, on the other hand, is more concerned with teachers’ use of best practices; her focus is on developing individual teachers’

instructional and content knowledge. Essentially, the role that a coach plays is tied to the basic purpose of the coaching program.

Walpole and McKenna (2008) found that two different approaches to coaching emerged that exemplified distinctly different models. The first is a “negotiated” model where coaching activities are steered by the choices of the coach, although the principal may reserve the right to assign specific teachers to a coach. For example, a district-mandated instructional goal may be in place to improve math or literacy, so the coach determines the steps, both content and process, involved in implementation and getting teachers on board (Fearn & Farnan, 2007; Gibson 2005, 2006; Swinnerton, 2007). The second approach is an “up-front direction” (Walpole & McKenna, 2008, p. 5) where teachers participate in coaching activities by choice and ask for scheduled feedback, observations, and professional learning group meetings. This model releases the coach from being responsible for negotiating “access to teachers or teaching” (p. 6). Ippolito’s (2008) examination of coaches in Boston Public Schools found that coaching models are typically divided according to a similar distinction; models take either a “responsive” (Dozier, 2006) or “directive” (Deussen et al., 2007) approach to coaching.

Best practices in literacy coaching. The National Staff Development Council developed standards based on three areas: context, process, and content. These standards focus on providing professional development that builds learning communities, uses student data to drive instruction, and develops teachers’ content knowledge and ability to implement best-practices instructional strategies (National Staff Development Council [NSDC], 2001). Coach-based professional development meets all these standards (Deussen & Buly, 2006). The National Advisory Board for the Literacy Coaching

Clearinghouse, a national organization committed to developing literacy coach resources, published a set of questions or considerations for schools to use when shaping or revising literacy coaching initiatives. Fisher (2007) developed a set of considerations for any literacy coach program. These considerations include a clear intended purpose and a “research base...related to literacy learning and development, adult learning, leadership, and professional development” (p. 1). Clear employment qualifications, professional learning time for coaches, and a clear vision of the “predicted and intended outcome of the literacy coaching program for teachers, coaches, administrators, and students” (p. 4) are all necessary, according to Fisher. These considerations offer a helpful framework for examining and comparing coaching models and looking for evidence of best-practices.

Building Momentum: Early Literacy Coaching Models

This portion of the literature review examines the early, ground-breaking studies that collected findings about program implementation, contextual influences, and impact on teacher practice. Initially, large urban districts with glaring student achievement gaps tried various coaching models, propelling the innovative professional development model into the research circles.

America's Choice. America's Choice School Design is a K-12 comprehensive school reform model created in 1998 by the National Center on Education and Economy. It focuses on increasing student achievement by providing rigorous, standards-based curriculum and support for all students. Schools or districts typically chose to use the America's Choice model due to a history of low student achievement. America's Choice includes on-site continuous technical assistance and a comprehensive professional development program for its teachers (Corcoran et al., 2000, p. 2). Each school that

accepts the design must agree to implement the program over three years and assign a design coach and a community outreach coordinator. According to Poglinco et al. (2003) a critical element of this model is the requirement that the school hire a literacy coach. This aspect of the model means that the teaching staff will have the opportunity to experience: school-embedded, ongoing, teacher professional development led by a full-time literacy coach designed to strengthen teachers' knowledge of the America's Choice approach to teaching and learning. This includes how to conduct a close analysis of their students' work in relation to standards, and using this knowledge to develop lessons calibrated to the needs of different students.

The coach's main responsibility is to "roll out" America's Choice Literacy workshops, specifically Writer's Workshop and Reader's Workshop. The reading and writing curricula could be defined as balanced as opposed to skills-based with students engaged with enriching literature. The process begins with the coach modeling the components for six weeks in order to practice and perfect delivery. During this phase, the coach is also developing a partnership with the model-classroom teacher. The coach then performs three weeks of demonstration lessons for teachers and observes their attempts at the literacy workshop. The coach is also responsible for helping to organize teacher meetings, analyze student work, and ensure that study groups acquire content knowledge (Poglinco et al., 2003). The Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) was contracted to perform an external evaluation of the program to provide formative feedback. Of particular interest was whether and how the implementation of America's Choice has changed the instructional practices of teachers to improve student learning (Poglinco et al., 2003). The CPRE evaluation team used both qualitative and quantitative

data including surveys, site visits, telephone interviews, document reviews, observations, and student performance measures to determine the status of the program at the school level.

The evaluation identified some of the factors that might diminish the literacy “roll out” process: teacher resistance, contextual constraints, limited principal knowledge, and limitations of coaches’ training (Poglinco et al., 2003, p. 20). This issue of professional development for coaches is critical. The study found that almost two-thirds of the coaches had limited experience with standards-based reform prior to assuming their roles as coaches and staff developers. This inexperience may have hampered the “roll out” of the literacy components.

A strong link between the quality of coaches’ implementation of the writer’s workshop and teachers’ capacity to implement the workshop model was established. In other words, there was a correlation that was strongly statistically significant between a coach’s rating and a teacher’s rating (Poglinco et al., 2003, p. 16). The study’s data also detailed how teachers responded when collaborating with a coach. Teachers felt supported when the coaches explain the program, show materials, demonstrate lessons, co-teach lessons, and then observe the teachers’ complete lessons. Interestingly, the study found that this more reciprocal, collaborative approach appeared for two distinctly different reasons: the coach lacked knowledge or confidence and therefore felt comfortable getting help from the teacher or the coach came from an inclusive approach and felt confident welcoming the other teacher to take an active role (Poglinco et al., p. 23).

The study's findings about coach observations and feedback are intriguing. Coaches stated that they tended to observe in rooms where they felt most comfortable, as opposed to where the need was the greatest. Most coaches gave feedback orally while others used forms to give written feedback. Coaches understood the need to remain positive and tactful, and were aware of how initial criticism or "honesty" left teachers feeling threatened. Coaches often found that asking a lot of questions could help lead into the teacher's own questions. They also were clear that they were offering feedback, not a mandate (Poglinco et al., 2003, p. 24). The researchers were surprised by the amount of informal, teacher-initiated interactions with the coach occurring in between classes, in the hall, and over the copier. The study also examined how teachers felt about the difference between group-focused staff development, such as book groups, versus sessions with the technical coach. Most staff members held the view that both components were necessary. As a teacher stated: "[b]oth are needed—they go hand-in-hand. Both have contributed to my comfort level. I couldn't do it with just coaching or with just the teacher meetings—couldn't do it without both. They are equally needed. They target two different areas" (Poglinco et al.). The coaches agreed stating that "[e]verything covered in teachers meetings is coordinated with something that has been done or will be done in the class—they have to be connected" (p. 34).

Finally, one of the biggest factors influencing coaches' implementation of the America's Choice reform was the coach's human relations skills. During interviews, it became clear that a coach's process rather than content and expertise was critical. This speaks to the issue of a coach's personality and ability to develop a trusting relationship. Those coaches who were described as friendly, diplomatic, thick-skinned, or funny had

fewer problems with resistance (Poglinco et al., 2003, p. 37). A principal summarized the responsibility that rests on a coach's shoulders:

Coaching provides ongoing consistent support for the implementation and instructional components. It is non-threatening and supportive—not evaluative. It gives a sense of how good professional development is. It also affords the opportunity to see it work with students. But, it hinges on the skills of the coach, and that is a weakness. (p. 42)

The CPRE recommended several design changes at the end of their evaluation which mirrored the above assertion. The main suggestions centered on coach selection and coach preparation. It also suggested some design changes to help integrate the major responsibilities of the coach (i.e., modeling direct practice, leading strategy acquisition, and facilitating reflection) into a concise professional development experience. Despite the variation of the schools' implementation schedule, the CPRE felt hopeful that that this rigorous reform program will grow to bring more positive changes for schools (Poglinco et al., 2003, p. 44).

Edna McConnel Clark Foundation. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation was a pioneer in developing a coaching model. In the late 1990s this foundation funded projects to improve student achievement and teacher effectiveness in San Diego City Schools by using peer coaches as tools for delivering school-based professional development. Educational Matters did a qualitative evaluation of the project, revealing a chronic lack of peer coaches, a high turnover rate, insufficiently qualified coaches, and an inability to assign coaches to schools with greatest needs (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Indeed the original peer coach model was never implemented. Demonstrating flexibility, the

researchers shifted their focus to understand how two middle schools utilized existing resources and grant monies to create in-house coaching models to improve student literacy (Neufeld & Roper, 2003).

The primary method for data collection focused on rounds of interviews over the course of several school years with coaches, unofficial coaches, administrators, and teachers who wrote extensive narratives from classroom observations. The researchers also facilitated a field experience for the principals and coaches by arranging a cross-country visit to the Mary Lyon Middle School to learn more about Boston's Collaborative Coaching and Learning program (Neufeld & Roper, 2003).

The major findings of the study suggest that both the San Diego schools were successful in developing collaborative and instructionally-focused cultures. Teachers demonstrated an understanding that they must take some responsibility for improving their own practice. The study also focused on some important structural aspects. The role of the system's literacy curriculum used as a framework for instructional content was noted as influential, as well as how much more effective it is to allow teachers who are coaching their peers to use a reduced teaching load as opposed to two full-time teachers using substitute coverage to allow time to coach.

This early study also hinted at the impact of principal leadership and support. For example, one principal had more impact since she had been at the school for five years working to establish an "instructionally focused culture" (Neufeld & Roper, 2003, p. 10). She also had an intern principal who had experience as a coach. Having an administrator who had been a coach allowed for some creative development opportunities. Knowing that coaches need practice, she provided time for the coaches to role play after watching

segments of an actual lesson, sat in on coaching sessions to offer feedback to the “real” coach. This administrator also expected that teachers would improve literacy instruction throughout all content areas. Forming lab classrooms and creating a math/science coach position, the leadership encouraged classroom peer coaching. During the initial implementation, this approach worked; some coaches, however, felt that only a reduced load would help them meet their teaching and coaching obligations.

The study captured some interesting ideas about the role of reflection. The coaches noted again and again the need to take time to reflect on their own practice. Beyond this, the coaches also understood that their success hinged on helping their colleagues reflect on their practice. “One of the things I’ll need to work on is listening to what a teacher needs, listening to a teacher talk and being able to extrapolate from that what they need, rather than me telling them what I do” (Neufeld & Roper, 2003, p. 17). The researchers note that this constructivist approach is exactly what the district is asking teachers to use with students so the learning theories are supporting one another.

Collaborative Coaching and Learning. The Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) model in Boston Public Schools is referred to again and again in research; CCL represents a “responsive” approach to coaching. Implemented in the 2001-2002 school year, the CCL model is based on cycles of reflection and professional development (Neufeld & Roper, 2002). During the beginning of an eight-week cycle, teachers work with a coach to identify what they want to study. This course of study allows teachers to develop an essential question that will focus them during their inquiry time and classroom demonstrations (Neufeld & Roper, 2002, p. 6). In the first year of implementation, the principals determined the focus; however, in the second year many

teachers were prepared and committed to determining their individual area of focus. The coach then worked through a pre-conference, a demonstration lesson, and a debrief session with the participating teacher.

Education Matters evaluated Year I and Year II of CCL's implementation and made suggestions in other documents. During the Year II evaluation, researchers observed eight lab-sites, including inquiry and debrief sessions, and interviewed 39 teachers, principals, and coaches (Neufeld & Roper, 2002, p. 2). In Year II they discovered that again CCL was a valuable method for teacher professional development. They discovered that teachers in Year II felt more empowered to select their area of inquiry which created more sense of ownership. The researchers also noted progress with the teachers being able to reflect more deeply, especially during the inquiry sessions. These sessions became forums for teachers to identify ways their work might affect students across the grades. With the increase in coaching support and the principals' scheduling efforts, every teacher participated in the cycles during Year II (Neufeld & Roper, 2002, p. 3).

In the second year of implementation, researchers found teachers' participation and ability to reflect increased. To understand this development, the study includes extensive descriptions and narratives from the inquiry sessions. These discussions are led by a coach and blossom around a selection of professional literature which is used as a context for examining professional practice and student work. In the sessions, the researchers found that the teachers actually talked to one another, not just to the coach. Frequently, the teachers drew connections between demonstration lessons, the professional literature, and their own practice. The study concludes with thoughts on the

challenges that lie ahead for implementing CCL during its third year. For example, “how can the CCL program help teachers understand that they can learn about new practices by actively practicing them? How can coaches learn to use novel examples of teaching in a lab site as opportunities for teachers to learn” (Neufeld & Roper, 2002, p. 63). Many of the issues discerned by the researchers are similar to ones facing any coaching program.

The early program evaluations of school improvement efforts based on coaching models gained the attention of several major foundations and government agencies eager to invest in promising professional development models. The Annenberg Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, Gates Foundation, Milken Foundation, and Department of Education initially provided funds for these studies. Despite the economic forecast, these funds do not appear to be drying up. In 2010 Annenberg committed \$31 million to coaching in Pennsylvania (Annenberg, 2010); Florida devoted over a third of its \$90 million literacy initiative to coaching (Marsh et al., 2008); and the federal government funded the coaching required by the Reading First intervention in primary schools (US Department of Education, 2002).

Recent Studies on Literacy Coaching

The purpose of this study is to examine the association between curricula, coaching, and student achievement. Rather than considering the full scope of coaching programs implemented across the United States and described extensively by Greene (2004) and Knight (2007), this literature review shifts to relevant empirical studies that examine literacy coaching, teachers’ instructional practices, and student achievement with special attention given to curricula and coaching mode. These later studies expand on previous researchers’ focus on implementation or process, and include data that make

it possible to start to ask questions about coaching and curricula programs' associations to student achievement.

A follow up to America's Choice. In December, 2009, a quasi-experimental study examining differences between three major Comprehensive School Reforms (CSR) and control schools found that students in America's Choice Schools had literacy-based achievement rates (such as writing and reading) that "grew at a significantly faster rate than students in comparison schools and faster than students in all other schools" (Rowan et al., 2009). The *Schools by Design* report found that one element that distinguished the successful approach of the America's Choice (AC) from other reform efforts was the strong instructional leadership provided by coaches (Rowan et al.)

While this recent study's examination of instructional content and practice supports the idea that research must include a focus on curricula, not just the coaching aspect, it reiterates the critical role that coaches play to support instructional reform with subsequent impacts on achievement. This study found that while AC's instructional practices were "prescriptive" with faithful, school-wide implementation, they were distinguishably different from the other comparison schools. For example, in AC schools the reading and writing curricula was literature-based as opposed to skills-based. This means that students were engaged in writing or reading longer sections of text, rather than responding to basic comprehension level short answer tasks.

South Carolina's Reading Initiative. The South Carolina Reading Initiative (SCRI) was established and remains a multi-year, site-based professional development initiative. The SCRI approach is based on best practices concerning staff development; the program understands that teachers learn when they have opportunities to participate in

an on-going learning process, to examine their own practice, and to investigate personal questions and experience the answers. Teachers stay in a cohort for three or four years under the guidance of a team of university professors and a literacy coach. The literacy coach develops a trusting, supportive environment, runs bi-monthly study groups, and works in classrooms with participants (Donnelly et al., 2005).

Because this initiative requires that teachers and coaches work together to examine theory and practice, the participants create a collaboration model to guide their work. The model demonstrates the interaction between school culture, social forces, teacher practice, and inquiry. Donnelly et al. (2005) found that when coaches and teachers were asked to describe their beliefs, the actual coaching conversations were transformative of both the coach and the teacher participants. To support this reflective, transformative process one coach started to use an ethnographer's notebook to promote an inquiry stance amongst the coaches. At each meeting, a different coach would record notes, collect artifacts, and interpret the interactions. As the authors point out, this helped the coaches learn to coach while coaching to learn (Donnelly et al., p. 339).

The initiative also embraced the issue of healthy dissonance; it acknowledged the natural tension that arises when anyone is trying to learn and encouraged teachers to dig deep to understand the how and whys of their instructional choices. Having time set aside to share and learn seemed to rejuvenate and inspire the cohort members. One excerpt from a cohort member is telling:

We have exquisitely good reasons for doing what we do, for believing what we believe. But unless we are actively curious about them, we will never discover what those reasons are. And unless we know what they are, we cannot ask

ourselves if they are still true or helpful or protective, if they are as relevant today as when we first developed them. (Donnelly et al., 2005, p. 344)

In 2007, a mixed methods study was conducted to answer two key questions about this statewide professional development: How are the beliefs and practices of SCRI teachers changed over the three years of SCRI K-5 Phase 1? What are the effects of the SCRI instruction on the development of reading skills and strategies of students in the SCRI K-5 Phase 1? The research team used the *Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile* (TORP) created by DeFord (1985) and the *South Carolina Reading Initiative Profile* (SC State Department of Education, 2000) to gather data. The TORP is a Likert-scale survey with 20 items used to identify teachers' theoretical orientation. The *South Carolina Reading Profile* is an instrument to help literacy leaders gauge and understand teachers' self-reported beliefs and practices connected to the SCRI goals. The research team also conducted 41 observations and interviews from a sample pulled from the 1,800 participants. The researchers collected data on students in matched pairs in participating and non-participating classrooms including demographic information. Finally, the coaches collected student reading data by conducting miscue analysis to determine instructional reading levels using leveled texts (Stephens et al., 2007).

The study found a significant shift in teachers' beliefs across the three years, indicating consistency with SCRI's emphases. After eight phases, more than 270 literacy coaches have worked in schools across the state. More than 6,000 South Carolina educators have participated in SCRI initiatives with an impact on more than 80,000 elementary children per year (Stephens et al., 2007). According to the study, struggling readers placed in SCRI classrooms could read more difficult texts and had higher

standardized scores than the control group. Interestingly, the number of Individual Education Plans needed in SCRI-classrooms decreased and struggling readers in those classrooms made substantial reading gains when compared to their peers in non-SCRI classrooms. According to the SCRI's *Implementation Rubric and Achievement Report for K-5*, data from schools with high implementation from 2003-2007 showed an average increase of 9.6% with some schools increasing their scores by as much as 19.2% (South Carolina Reading Initiative, 2009).

According to the Director of Instructional Promising Practice for South Carolina's Department of Education, "SCRI is definitely aimed at helping people understand that one size doesn't fit all. It's based on teachers being equipped to assess what a child knows and then working from that strength model" (South Carolina Reading Initiative, 2009). South Carolina has continued to find ways to fund SCRI, eventually garnering federal monies through Reading First grants.

The sunshine state approach. Although the current study focuses on elementary grades, the research done about the work of middle school coaches in Florida is worth consideration. A report entitled *Supporting Literacy Across the Sunshine State* examines the impact of coaching in the statewide literacy initiative *Just Read, Florida!* established in 2001 by then-Governor Jeb Bush (Marsh et al., 2008). The key features of this initiative include school-based reading coaches in elementary, middle, and secondary schools; professional development in scientifically based reading instruction; and purchasing supplemental, research-based reading instructional materials. Florida's reading program emphasizes the five components of reading instruction—phonemic

awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—established by the National Reading Panel in 2000.

The *Just Read, Florida!* program emphasizes the use of a coaching “continuum,” allowing coaches to decrease or increase their support depending on the circumstances. This continuum approach is in contrast to a coach’s strict adherence to either content or process, as seen in “technician/experts” (Toll, 2005) and “cognitive” (Costa & Garmston, 1998) respectively. The definition for a reading coach included in the study comes from Vickaryous and Slover (2006): “A reading coach is a professional development liaison within the school to support, model, and continuously improve SBRR [scientifically-based reading research] instructional programs in reading to assure reading improvement for all students” (Marsh et al., p. 26).

This mixed methods study focused on the following research questions: “How is the reading coach program being implemented by the state, districts, schools, and coaches? What has been the impact of coaching on teachers’ practice, students’ achievement in reading and mathematics, and other outcomes? What features of models and practices for reading coaches are associated with better outcomes?” (Marsh et al., 2008, p. xvi). The researchers collected survey data from principals, teachers, and coaches in 113 middle schools in eight large districts and conducted interviews, focus groups, and observations in six case study schools and two case study districts. A longitudinal analysis was used with the student achievement data to determine how students achieved across time with reading and math scores from the Florida achievement test. The study examined whether different variations of coaching models impacted

student achievement. Secondly, the researchers conducted a cross-section regression analysis linking survey data with student achievement (Marsh et al.).

The study's findings include district-specific data about coach qualifications, experience, compensation, and professional development needs. It also found that many districts shared the similar coaching model, relying on the state's suggested coach qualifications and division of time. Small but significant gains in terms of student reading achievement were found, and the study noted the relationship between the numbers of hours the coach spent helping teachers analyze or disaggregate assessment data and students' increased achievement scores. Various administrative duties (i.e. paperwork) kept coaches from completing their tasks. In fact, less than 50% of a coach's time was spent working in classroom. Interestingly, more than three-fourths of coaches spent more than six hours during a two-week period offering a "listening" ear and providing informal feedback, in contrast to formal observations or collaborative planning. The study also found that the reading coaches spent more time with language arts teachers and less time with teachers in other content areas (Marsh et al., 2008).

Data about the curricular areas receiving the most emphasis from the coaches show that coaches prioritized their focus to the NRP's five components. For example, more than one-third of the reading and social studies teachers noted an increased use of students reading aloud in class, known as "round robin reading," to build fluency. The results of the study did indicate that coaches placed in low scoring schools increased their focus on modeling and supporting differentiation, phonics, and phonemic awareness. The Just Read, Florida! Program continued to receive funding and former Governor Crist supported the efforts.

Early Reading Professional Development Study. The Early Reading Professional Development Intervention Study used an experimental design in order to measure the impact of two different research-based professional development interventions on student achievement in high-poverty schools in one state (Garet et al., 2008). The study was conducted in 90 primary schools in six districts with schools randomly assigned to various interventions and one school used as a control group. Intervention A consisted of content-based professional development that started in the summer and continued through the school year, while Intervention B had the same approach but added the feature of an in-school coach.

The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of coaching on teachers' knowledge and teachers' instructional practices. The research team administered the *Reading Content and Practices Survey* to all participants to determine a baseline of teacher knowledge. Trained observers visited classrooms to collect data about teachers' use of three distinct instructional practices: explicit teaching methods, independent student activity, and differentiation of instruction (Garet et al., 2008). Finally the study collected students' reading scores from second grade district assessments.

The two-week long summer professional development seminar was taught by representatives from the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), a literacy curriculum built on the NRP's components. Coaches received additional training from the Consortium for Reading Excellence; there were not adequate details about the philosophy or model of coaching being put into place. The professional development seminar was designed to impact or "nurture" teacher knowledge, while the coaches were expected to assist teachers as they "translate this knowledge into practice"

(Garet et al., 2008, p. xv). The estimated effects of literacy coaching on teachers' knowledge of reading were positive, though not statistically significant. The estimated effects of literacy coaching did not show a statistically significant impact on teachers' instructional practices. There were no significant effects on students' reading achievement either.

The initial assumptions built into the study's coaching model may have created some methodological limitations that might explain the lack of effect. The LETRS staff taught the content of the curricula, leaving to coaches all responsibility for helping teachers transfer this knowledge into practice. This design brings up some concerns. Perhaps the LETRS staff who worked with the teachers or the professional development series for the coaches did not adequately prepare the coaches for this role. For example, the treatment groups A and B did use explicit instruction to a greater degree than the control group, but did not implement independent student activities or differentiated instruction (Garet et al., 2008). The content and quality of the professional development series and LETRS curriculum being implemented and the quality of the training for the coaches may have attenuated the educational impact of literacy coaching.

Reading First. As mentioned earlier, Reading First was a federally funded \$1.0 billion-per-year initiative to help all primary school children read at or above grade level by third grade. Established through the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), Reading First funds could be spent on three distinct areas: reading curricula and materials focused on the five essential components of reading defined by the National Reading Panel; professional development and coaching to assist teachers in how to use scientifically-based reading programs and to work with struggling students; and diagnosis and

prevention of early reading problems through assessment and interventions (Gamse et al., 2008). The first grants were distributed in 2002; by 2007 more than 5,880 schools used these funds (Gamse et al.). Interestingly, the average financial award for the schools in the study was \$601 per student, or \$188,782 per school.

It is important to note that the Reading First program requirement “combines local flexibility and national commonalities” (Gamse et al., 2008, p. xvi). In other words, states can select to spend the funds but must choose items from a vendors’ list to purchase materials for three components: reading programs, professional development providers, and assessments. The materials had to meet the National Reading Panel’s definition for scientifically-based reading instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Interestingly, while various school systems selected their reading instructional materials from a range of approved vendors, all of the choices reflected a core-based reading program approach. In other words, Reading First encouraged teachers to select an all-encompassing program, rather than implementing a variety of resources. A large majority of the schools adopted SRA/McGraw Hill’s *Open Court* series, which provides daily teaching agendas, pacing guides, teaching scripts, and assessment materials. It includes decodable leveled texts based on the NCLB proficiency levels of basic and proficient. This reading program is used daily and the entire instructional cycle requires two hours of teacher-directed, whole-class instruction (“Features for Open Court Reading”, 2005).

A three-year, comprehensive evaluation of Reading First examined the impact of the program in 248 schools in 13 states (Gamse, et al., 2008). The *Reading First Impact Study Final Report* answers critical questions about the program’s impact on student

reading achievement, classroom instruction, and assessed any relationship between the use of scientifically-based reading instruction and student achievement. The study collected this sample of data including students' achievement scores, observations of teachers' instructional practices, observations of students' engagement with print, and surveys of teachers, coaches, and principals. The surveys were based on questions about access to professional development, the use of differentiated support of readers, and the use of assessments (Gamse et al.).

The study used a regression discontinuity design as part of the quasi-experimental research method. The study's results were consistent across all sites. No relationship was found between the number of years a student was in a school using Reading First methods and his/her reading achievement. The study found that Reading First had a statistically significant impact on teachers' use of time to instruct the five components of literacy instruction and on student's ability to decode. There was no statistically significant impact on students' engagement with print. Similarly, Reading First had a statistically significant impact on the use of highly explicit instruction and amount of high quality student practice, but no impact on students' reading comprehension.

An impact was detected for teachers' use of extra class time focused on National Reading Panel's essential components, but there was no statistically significant impact noted for teachers' use of differentiated materials or teachers' use of assessments to inform his/her choices about grouping or lesson focus. Finally, the research did find a statistically significant difference between the average amount of time teachers spent on reading instruction per day. In a classroom using Reading First teachers spent, on

average, 105.7 minutes on reading instruction versus 87.5 minutes in a classroom without a Reading First approach (Gamse et al., 2008).

While Reading First made an impact on teachers' use of time and children's ability to decode, it was not associated with demonstrable progress in reading comprehension. Why did the extensive investment of time, people, and money not produce significant improvement, particularly students' reading comprehension? One variable worth considering is the level of experience the reading coaches brought to the more than 5,600 participating schools. Data show that while Reading First schools are more likely than other Title I schools to have full-time reading coaches, they are typically novice coaches (US Department of Education, 2008). The coaches do not have adequate training or experience with engaging peers in conversation about literacy practices and the coaches do not spend the majority of their time in direct support of teachers (Deussen et al., 2007). On the other hand, the design of the coaching program, primarily to implement "teacher-proof" reading curricula, may be less of a significant variable contributing to Reading First's failure to improve students' comprehension than the content and scope of the actual curriculum.

An additional study of Reading First. A small-scale study examining the effects of coaching on student achievement in grades K-3 in Reading First schools sheds light on the question of a coach's allocation of time. Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2007) study asked the question: does literacy coaching make a difference? The study's sample included 12 coaches, 121 classroom teachers, and 3,029 students in one school district involved in its first year of Reading First implementation. The data included weekly coaching logs that

captured the coaches' time and number of interactions per teacher, type of interactions, and the content of each action.

The test data for students were scores from the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS). A hierarchical linear model was used to analyze the impact of coaching on student achievement. The data analysis indicated that the "coaching hours spent administering assessments, conferencing, modeling, and observing were significant predictors of students' total gain, as were total coaching hours" (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2007, p. 4). In fact, for each hour of coaching received, a teacher's students made a 0.8 point improvement on the DIBELS assessment. In addition, when a coach spent time either conferencing with a teacher or administering assessments, the students experienced more of a gain. Two important limitations for the study include the variance of coaching quality and the fact that the data was collected within one school year so that it is not possible to determine long-term effects of coaching.

Foundation for Comprehensive Early Literacy Learning. Since 1994, the California-based Foundation for Comprehensive Early Literacy Learning (FCELL) has provided high-quality professional development to more than 17,000 teachers in 1,167 schools to develop instructional capacity to teach reading and writing ("Major Components of CELL, ExLL and Second Chance", n.d.). The Foundation offers three distinct approaches including a primary program, Comprehensive Early Literacy Learning (CELL), elementary Extended Literacy Learning (ExLL), and adolescent Second Chance Literacy Learning. The program is built on the premise that improved teacher capacity will increase student achievement. The professional development program includes a range of resources for teachers and is designed to help teachers

acquire teaching methods built into classroom frameworks while using the findings from the National Reading Report. The frameworks consist of literacy activities that engage students and develop their phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The FCELL program also includes high quality children's literature and emphasizes students' need to read independently and "recognizes the reciprocal nature of reading and writing" ("Major Components of CELL, ExLL and Second Chance," n.d.).

The FCELL programs focus on the use of professional development to reform schools. The program uses scientifically-based reading research, proficient reader research, to create a "balanced" professional development model. The program aligns instructional methods across grade levels, pays attention to inclusion of special needs students, uses student data to inform instruction, and measures success through student performance measures.

The Foundation's professional development model starts with an extensive planning period that includes a school-based planning team representing the instructional leadership of the school including the school principal, reading specialist, special education teacher, an in-house literacy coordinator who serves as a non-evaluative coach and mentor, and several teacher representatives. These teachers are expected to implement the frameworks and receive support from the coach/literacy coordinator. The literacy coordinator has five full weeks of training and spends half of his/her day teaching teachers how to use the framework and also attends meetings with other coordinators/coaches. In addition, the literacy coordinator provides observation feedback and support for the school-based planning teams (Swartz, 2003).

The Foundation's publications suggest that the teachers and practices are the main focus, not any specific reading program or set of consumable materials (Swartz, 2003). This is strikingly different from the Reading First design that requires schools to select a reading program and materials from a list of providers. In fact, FCELL uses a variety of teaching materials, professional books, and children's literature books during the professional development sessions. The effective and selective use of basal readers is also demonstrated.

The primary goal of the Foundation's professional development model is to increase teachers' capacity and impact student achievement. In order to gauge its success, the Foundation uses a state's accountability measure to compare the performance of schools using its methods versus control groups based in California. California uses a measure called the Academic Performance Index to determine a school's success. In 2001, on average 52% of California elementary schools met their target, while schools that fully implemented CELL or ExLL showed 70% success (Swartz, 2003).

The Foundation has also implemented professional development trainings in other western states, including Nevada, Utah, and Montana. For example, second and third grade Native American students in Montana showed tremendous gains on their system's diagnostic reading instrument. In 2001, the baseline scores were below 30% on reading achievement. However, after one year of implementation of CELL, students scored 100% on the instrument. The striking degree of improvement also results from the Foundation's Second Chance professional development model designed specifically for teachers of adolescent readers. Over a two-year period, 1999-2001, six California schools

implemented the Second Chance model and surpassed their expected learning targets by 20-50% (Swartz, 2003).

In order to determine if the change in students' achievement was actually related to the implementation of professional development, the Foundation collected data to examine the effect of its model. A longitudinal comparison of ten schools, over a four-year period, with varying degrees of CELL implementation, indicates that the professional development did impact the students' reading achievement. Three schools that fully implemented the CELL model gained, on average, 10 normal curve equivalents (NCEs) in reading comprehension. In contrast, the schools that partially implemented the model increased student NCEs by 2, 3, and 6, while schools using a district-modified model showed NCE changes of -2, 1, 3, and 5. Schwarz (2003) suggests these findings demonstrate that the impact of the model is affected when aspects such as training are altered.

The Foundation provided its professional development model to several California districts where *Open Court* was already established. The achievement growth, measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, was only 7% when examining *Open Court* schools without any CELL training. In *Open Court* schools that implemented CELL training, the achievement growth rose to 18% (Swartz, 2003). This comparison is noteworthy. Whether it was the unique Foundation professional development model with group sessions, the well-trained literacy coordinator, or the deliberate exposure of students and teachers to an array of texts, beyond *Open Court*, it appears that the model did affect students and teachers. The Foundation's research findings do not provide a lengthy description of the methodology or data collection procedures, so it is difficult to

know if the study controlled for related variables which might indicate internal validity problems.

The Literacy Collaborative. The Literacy Collaborative is a site-based professional development program that is led by school-based literacy coaches, or literacy coordinators. The literacy coordinators are classroom teachers selected within a school site to receive intensive training on theories behind literacy acquisition and the program's framework.

The Language and Literacy Framework reflects a three-block approach to instruction. This approach allows a flexible approach to student groupings, teacher-directed activities, content, and student assessment. The three blocks include language and word study, reading workshop, and writing workshop ("A Language and Literacy Framework for Literature and the Content Areas", 2009). While the Literacy Collaborative uses the five elements of reading identified by the National Reading Panel, it also lists ten essential characteristics that reflect a school's commitment to be in the Literacy Collaborative. Some of the characteristics that distinguish a participating school include prioritizing instruction, establishing an uninterrupted two and half hour block for literacy instruction, providing a school-based literacy coordinator, purchasing extensive materials and sets of leveled books, and providing professional development opportunities with follow up options such as study groups, action research, or coaching. The role or purpose of the literacy coordinator is to develop the school's capacity by focusing on the instructional practices, demonstrating how to use student data to inform teaching practices, and helping teachers diagnose and identify students' strengths and needs.

The first two years of a longitudinal, federally-funded study on the Literacy Collaborative's impact on student achievement is reported in Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter's (2008) *The Value-Added Effects of Literacy Coaching on Student Literacy Learning*. The study incorporated a value-added analysis of the effects of the program considering the category of both school and teacher. In the accelerated multiple cohort design, achievement scores from the Terra Nova Multiple Assessments of Reading and DIBELS were tracked for seven cohorts in four grades for four years. A latent growth rate for an average student in an average school and under an average teacher's guidance was established during the baseline year. The study's student population was drawn from eight states and more than 40% of the students were from low income households. More than 250 teachers and 8,500 students provided data and helped to make this the largest data set focused on the impact of coaching on student achievement.

The program effect found a 16% increase in learning for students in Literacy Collaborative schools and by the second year of implementation this rose to 27% increase over baseline growth (Biancarosa, Bryk & Dexter, 2008). Interestingly, this model also allowed for the researchers to examine how well these increases were maintained over the summer months when students' reading lags. The value-added effect remained strong after the summer break. Another finding was significant increase of professional communication. The study looked both at reciprocity and the centrality of the literacy coach. Additionally, the study found that student improvement was predicted by the amount of coaching a teacher received.

Significant time and research have been invested to learn more about coaching. A summary of this research reveals the building blocks that form a foundation for the recent

literacy coach studies, including an examination of the professional development and reading curricula models. Whether a literacy coach model or reading curricula model is built using best practices may matter. Successful efforts to improve reading achievement appear to emphasize identification and implementation of evidence-based practices that promote high rates of achievement (Bond & Dykstra, 1967/1997; National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, 2001).

A Framework for Research on Coaching

Walpole and McKenna (2008) examined peer-reviewed studies that employed experimental designs focusing on coaching and achievement or teacher practice. After sifting through the abstracts of more than 176 studies, they found that 19 were qualified for full review, with only one published before 2003. Examining these studies, Walpole and McKenna found emerging themes that “inform future coaching efforts and continued coaching research” (2008, p. 5). These themes include: models of coaching, school and district characteristics, working with administrators, and serving the needs of teachers.

The idea that multiple factors impact staff development and student learning is not new. Guskey and Sparks (1996) clearly identified the key factors of “content,” “process,” and “context” that play a part and impact the quality of staff development. Taylor (2008) builds on Guskey and Sparks’ work, adding to the delineation and possible influences impacting teacher practice and student achievement. Figure 2.1 exhibits the numerous factors and anticipates the eventual impact on teachers’ practice and student outcomes.

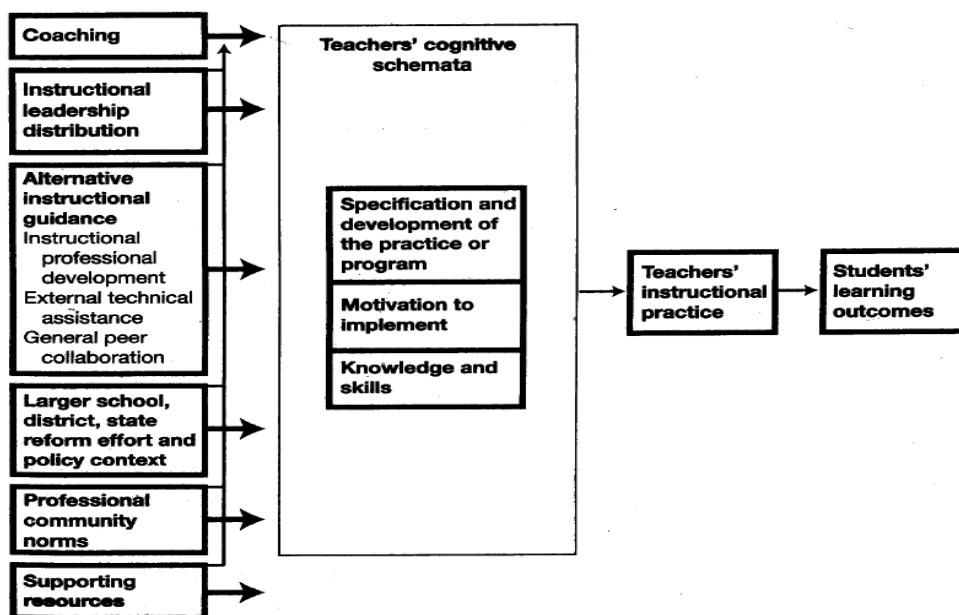


Figure 2.1. Taylor's (2008) model of multiple influences on student learning outcomes
Note. From *Effective Teacher Leadership: Using Research to Inform and Reform* (p.23), edited by M. M. Mangin and S. R. Stoelinga (Eds.), 2008, New York: Teachers College. Copyright 2008 by the Teachers College. Reprinted with permission.

Taylor specifically includes coaching as one "...hypothesized factor affecting teachers' cognitive schemata related to instruction improvement" (2008, p. 23). Taylor argues that coaching provides a role and an approach for an instructional leader to bridge the gap that exists between the administration of a school and the technical aspects of instruction. Taylor offers a microscopic view that includes: purpose (organizational, collegial, personal growth), knowledge and skills (content, pedagogical, curricular), form (technical, collaborative, problem-solving, simple support), and style (directive, facilitative). Structural dimensions such as location, duration, frequency, grade level, and subject are also noted. According to Taylor, coaching is never a solo, isolated reform effort, but rather is influenced by district level policy imperatives: "coaching may be reinforced by strong complementary efforts or may be frustrated by weak or incompatible efforts..." (2008, p. 22).

Walpole and McKenna (2008) embrace Taylor's model and conclude that this examination of coaching "though daunting in its complexity, is intellectually elegant and suggests how research questions must be sharpened to categorize the constructs of coaching" (p. 4). A significant construct that must be categorized is the model itself. A coaching model manages to do several key things including: guide the day-to-day decisions, shape delivery of feedback to and support for teachers, determine logistics about interactions with teachers inside and outside the classroom, and show how the model signals and "identifies the focus – the instructional or metacognitive goal that the coach uses as a target" (p. 4). This thinking leads to an assumption that different models can affect the choices and realities of the coach's experience, the teacher's experience, and ultimately, the literacy coach's success (Fisher, 2007; Toll, 2002).

Identifying the research gap. Literacy coach experts call for more quantitative studies that explicitly examine the link between literacy coaching and teacher growth and/or change in student achievement (Greene, 2004; International Reading Association, 2004; Poglinco et al., 2003; Shanklin, 2008, 2009; Toll, 2004; Walpole, 2000; Walpole and McKenna, 2004, 2008). Taylor (2008) summarizes the immediate need for empirical research: "the differentiation of coaching from other related phenomena is critical or it will become indistinct and its effectiveness will be difficult to assess" (p. 27). As the research community plays catch up to the coaching phenomenon, it is important both to broaden and deepen the research base for coaching. A literacy coach must negotiate the presence of a district's methods or materials. An additional dimension must be examined: the district's reading curricula. At this point, the research community has not yet explored the intersection of literacy coaching models and reading curricula models.

The coaching and curricula landscape in North Carolina is a relatively unexplored territory. In fact, no quantitative study exists on either coaching or curricula in North Carolina elementary schools. Although North Carolina has been a leader of innovative educational reform initiatives, creating accountability measures before the NCLB era and offering financial support to National Board candidates, the absence of local, state-based coaching studies is striking.

The Teacher Academy of North Carolina, a professional development organization funded by the North Carolina General Assembly, conducted an in-house program evaluation in 2008 of their three-year effort to train more than 200 literacy coaches in response to Governor Easley's NC Middle School Literacy Coach Initiative. One informal, qualitative study by the staff at the Teacher Academy examines how coach-based professional development models affected eighth graders reading achievement and motivation. Their conclusions have not been disseminated to the public (B. Hux, personal communication, February, 18, 2010). After three years of funding the Literacy Coach Initiative, the General Assembly chose to cut funds in July 2009. In June 2010, school districts faced the end of Reading First funds, and it is unclear if they will continue to implement the basic elements of the program.

The research gap means that North Carolina's policy makers must decide about funding without adequate local data to inform their choices. School districts across North Carolina select and implement different literacy coaching models and reading curricula models to fulfill their particular student and teacher needs, but no study exists that examines the relationship to student reading achievement. This study aims to identify the coaching models and reading curricula models in North Carolina elementary schools and

to determine what relationship different coaching and curricula models have to student achievement.

Theoretical Framework

The professional discourses about both reading curricula and literacy coaching identify the current debates, the standards of best practice, and the newest research that inform these independent entities. Noted as a “hot topic in 2010” (International Reading Association, 2010), literacy coaching is a professional development approach that districts can choose to implement or ignore. Reading curricula, however, are a required element in a district. Discourse about reading curricula is passionate and long-standing. While reading curricula are ubiquitous in schools, the teaching methods and materials are what can be nuanced and chosen. Reading curricula are inextricably part of the learning environment that literacy coaching models are attempting to impact. A theoretical framework is needed in order to examine how a district’s literacy coach model and district’s reading curricula interact.

This study’s theoretical framework draws upon elements of Taylor’s (2008) *Model of the multiple influences on teaching* and Fisher’s (2007) *Coaching Considerations*. As stated earlier, Taylor’s model delineates the factors that may have an eventual impact on teachers’ practice and students’ outcomes. Taylor’s identifies the “larger school, district, state reform effort and policy context” and the “specification and development of the practice or program” (p. 17) as factors that impact teacher practice and eventually student learning outcomes. These factors are particularly useful in this study. Likewise, Fisher’s *Coaching Considerations* (2007) identifies ten key questions that schools, districts, and states should answer before developing literacy coaching

programs. These considerations created by the National Advisory Board for the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse include questions about the intended purpose of literacy coaching program, the program's theoretical underpinnings, the qualifications of literacy coach, as well as questions about funding and assessment. The majority of the considerations align with Taylor's dimensions and classification of coaching. Building on this alignment, I propose a blended model (see Figure 2.2).

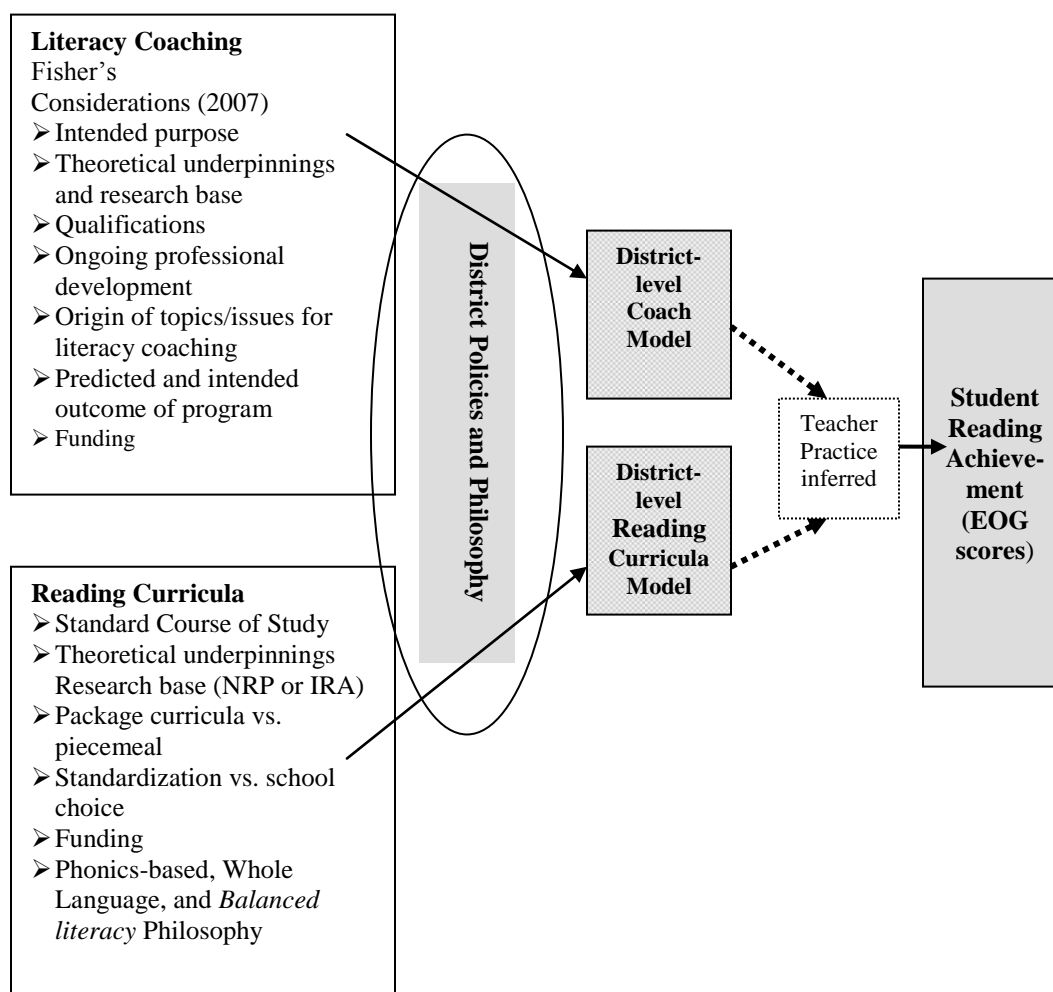


Figure 2.2. Theoretical framework of literacy coaching and reading curricula

This model offers a framework for classifying and examining the relationship between North Carolina's different elementary literacy coaching and reading curricula

models on students' reading achievement. The model starts on the left side of the figure with the separate conceptualization of literacy coaching and reading curricula. These concepts are then dissected through the considerations expressed by authorities of literacy coaching and reading curricula. The next step of the model demonstrates how these concepts are interpreted as they move through the lens or factor of district-level policy and context, as suggested by Taylor (2008).

Next, the district-tailored literacy coaching model and reading curricula model are implemented in some districts with coaches and in others without coaches with an inferred impact on teacher practice. This study does not seek to measure teacher practice; therefore, the dotted border indicates an assumption built into this model. However, the study will seek to examine the relationship to student outcomes and so the model terminates at the box for student achievement, measured by End of Grade test scores.

Summary

This review of literature provides a framework for this study, particularly the studies that investigate key elements of curricula and coaching. By reviewing the studies about curricula and coaching, the literature review helps to establish a framework from which to understand and pose questions about the possible associations between coach-based professional development and curricula and their possible impact on student achievement. For example, in the examination of Reading First's impact, Gamse et al. (2008) determined that a disproportionate amount of time spent on decoding, one of the five essential reading components of instruction, does not increase the likelihood of producing life-long readers. Students need more than practice in decoding and fluency. They need time to develop comprehension skills. This study speaks to the phonics-based

versus balanced literacy feuds. It also suggests that it is important to determine what instructional component a curriculum or a literacy coach emphasizes.

The extensive section on early coaching sought to demonstrate how qualitative in nature the research-base has been for literacy coaching. With the calls for more quantitative-driven research, it is important to acknowledge the pioneer work done to both demystify and describe the role that coaches have played in reform movements in the last two decades. The more recent studies have also played a critical role in laying groundwork. Honing in on the particulars of coach-based techniques, Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2007) study based on coaching log books suggests that the types of activities coaches engage in on a daily basis matter and may have direct impact on a coach's ability to be effective and to improve teacher quality.

The recent work of Biancarosa, Bryk and Dexter (2008) on the Literacy Collaborative is impressive, not only for its sheer size but its commitment to examine achievement trends over time. This study lends authentication to the idea that curricula implementation takes time and cannot be seen as a one year quick fix.

By tracing the history of reading curricula and the influences felt from educational research and governmental agencies, we are better informed about why the basal's transformation into a core-based program is significant. By learning about the different camps entrenched around the issues of teaching reading, we are better prepared to examine North Carolina's curricula landscape.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the steps and decisions involved in determining the study's methodology. It is divided into five main parts: rationale, population and sample, instruments, data collection procedures, and statistical analyses. This quantitative study is built on the following six research questions:

1. What are the different reading curricula models used in North Carolina's districts in third, fourth, and fifth grades?
2. What are the different literacy coaching models used in North Carolina's districts in third, fourth, and fifth grades?
3. To what extent do these models reflect best practices according to guidelines established by the International Reading Association, the National Reading Panel, and the Literacy Coach Clearinghouse?
4. Are there patterns in the type of reading curricula models and literacy coaching models that districts implement?
5. What associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and third, fourth, and fifth grade reading achievement trends in North Carolina over a four-year period?
6. What associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and achievement trends for the subgroup of "Economically Disadvantaged" students over a four-year period?

Rationale for Research Design

Creswell (2005) describes quantitative research as a method that asks “specific, narrow questions to obtain measurable and observable data on variables” (p. 47). While experimental methods arguably remain the gold standard in quantitative research, it is difficult to establish a control group and manipulate treatments across North Carolina’s school districts. Rather, this study employed a non-experimental, ex post facto, quantitative design. The ex post facto, or causal comparative method, allows for discovery and examination of the causal or functional relationship among variables (Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh, 2002). This study focused on the functional relationship among variables. This approach was also selected in order to examine naturally-occurring treatments (i.e. a district’s use of particular reading curricula or coaching model) and the relationship to student achievement.

This method did not provide conclusive, causal statements. While the method did not allow for controlling variables or conditions, this design provided an opportunity to infer how, and to what degree, the two independent variables, a school district’s coaching and reading curricula models, related to the dependent variable, students’ reading achievement data across the four-year span.

Population

This study’s focus on reading curricula models and literacy coaching models required that participants had specific knowledge about these topics. Curriculum directors are school leaders who are typically responsible for identifying and articulating districts’ reading curricula and professional development. The population of the study was all

elementary curriculum directors working in North Carolina's 115 school districts during August to September 2010.

The survey invitation and recruitment targeted all 115 public North Carolina curriculum directors with an aspiration to represent the entire population. Employing a state-wide approach and using updated school systems' e-mail addresses alleviated issues related to coverage and sampling. In the end, the sample consisted of 40 curriculum directors (35% response rate) who completed the Reading Curricula Survey. A subset ($n = 11$) completed the Literacy Coaching Survey.

Data Sources

This study collected two sources of data: participant responses to the researcher-created survey instruments and archival data in the form of four years of reading achievement data for the upper elementary grades. There were no established surveys instruments meeting the needs of this unique study; therefore, using experience and connections to experts in the field of coaching in North Carolina, I created, validated, and piloted two survey instruments. The achievement data were collected from the NC School Report Cards website, <http://www.ncreportcards.org>, formed originally in the 2001-2002 school year. In 2001, Governor Easley and the General Assembly legislated that the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) make a range of information about schools and districts available to the general public. The North Carolina Research Council helped to create the various indicators including student performance data, class size, attendance, and teacher quality. Now solely maintained by NCDPI, this easy to use website provides data about each district and school in North Carolina from 2001 to 2010.

Survey Instrument

The Reading Curricula Survey and Literacy Coaching Survey instruments reflect a synthesis of literacy and coaching resources from several leading organizations (see Appendix A and Appendix B). I drew upon resources from the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse website (n.d.), a collaborative effort by the International Reading Association (IRA) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) to determine key concepts in reading curricula and literacy coaching. The National Staff Development Council's document on *Standards for Professional Development* (NSDC, 2001) provided a coherent list of best practices in staff development. Finally, I consulted leading coaching experts' work such as Moran's (2007) *Differentiated Literacy Coaching* and Toll's (2007) *Lenses on Literacy Coaching*. These best practices in reading curricula and literacy coach models were embedded into the survey instruments.

Using the experiences from being a classroom teacher, literacy coach and literacy consultant, I also included components of quality literacy coaching models and reading curricula models that reflected best practices observed in familiar school districts. In order to mitigate potential biases, I embedded key components of best practices as determined in the NSDC and the IRA's *Standards for Literacy Coaching* (2008), as well as the National Reading Panel's full recommendations for reading curricula models. These resources served as the foundation for the surveys' blueprint which guided the formation of questions.

The surveys were designed to illustrate and distill the key elements of districts' upper elementary reading curricula and literacy coaching models (Research Questions One and Two). The surveys included questions about the actual content and logistics of

the literacy coaching and reading curricula models. Embedded throughout the surveys were answer choices that reflected best practices or less regarded practices in professional development or reading curricula. The standards of best practices in reading instruction and coaching were embedded into question stems and potential answer choices in order to capture to what degree curriculum directors' responses matched or varied from current best practices in reading and coaching (Research Question Three).

While an assumption was made that the participants, as educational leaders, had vested interests about districts' overall reading achievement, I enacted strategies to insure a high participation rate. Curriculum directors are typically extremely overworked with many responsibilities. Efforts were made to construct the survey instruments using the tailored design method (Dillman, 2009). This means that specific attention was focused on tailoring the survey instrument in terms of timing of contacts, gaining university support, selecting a type of incentives, determining survey length and layout, ordering questions, and attending to overall visual design. Therefore, attention to the unique issues and needs of the population being sampled and the setting for this study were critical in order to ensure that the survey was user-friendly. Similarly, the survey was constructed with motivational features and special attention to the leverage-salience theory (Groves, Singer, & Corning, 2000) in order to increase the likelihood of achieving high quantity and quality participant responses.

Built on the assumption salience was more influential on response rates than the length of the survey (Bean & Roszkowski, 1995), the Reading Curricula Survey included 20 items asking about the district's upper elementary reading curricula including process and timeline for curricula selection, articulation, and implementation. Questions focused

on district-level affiliations with larger educational entities (i.e. Teachers' College or Reading First); the adoption of commercial curricula programs and the purpose, content, and design of the district's reading model were also included.

The last questions of the reading curricula section required respondents to indicate if the district had a literacy coaching program. If the respondent answered yes, the survey branched to a line of questions to ask if he/she was knowledgeable enough to answer questions about the program. If no, then the survey provided a text box for recording the appropriate contact person. The survey software then either exited the respondent or directed the respondent to the beginning of the Literacy Coaching Survey. This separate, 42-item survey included an initial welcome, definitions, and demographics section with questions about the district's literacy coach program's history and purpose. The next section contained questions about the format and organization of the coaching program. The final section was built upon questions about the coaching program's design, about the actual content, theory of coaching, and the role of coaches with implementation of reading curricula.

Both surveys were built using Qualtrics software with assistance from the university's technical support person. Both surveys used a variety of response formats including categorical responses with drop-down menus. The survey also included questions requiring respondents to rank or assign values for different components as well as the chance to complete individualized responses using text boxes to inform the "other" response format. It contained several branching features so different responses triggered different follow up questions.

Validity and reliability of the survey. Several critical issues were addressed to ensure the two survey instruments' reliability and the responses' validity. In order to minimize errors, the survey and the process for data collection underwent a two-stage piloting process.

The first stage was an expert panel review. Members of the expert panel consisted of six literacy experts representing a range of institutions. Some of the members were colleagues or former supervisors of mine, others were recommended by peers. Expert panel members were in the position to answer questions about district-level reading curricula and coaching program. Admittedly, all the panel members were from the North Carolina's western region, but their viewpoints and perspectives were not homogeneous.

Several members of the expert review panel work or have worked, at one time, within one of North Carolina's mountain school districts as professional developers or curriculum specialists. One member was an educational consultant who has a depth of experience in reading curricula and has worked across the state with districts to implement reading curricula to improve elementary reading achievement and to develop teachers' knowledge. One member was currently the lead coach for a local, urban school district. One was a former principal and former executive curriculum director whose doctoral studies focused on staff development and literacy development. One member was professor and chair of the local university's elementary and middle education department with scholarly work emphasizing reading instruction. One member was an elementary director of an expeditionary learning charter school that uses a variety of reading methods including direct phonics instruction and balanced literacy reading workshop approaches.

After an initial conversation or informal e-mail to confirm contact information, I e-mailed a more formal notification letter and survey link to clarify expectations for the review panel members (Appendix C). The expert panel completed both surveys and then ranked select survey items for their alignment with best practices using the Expert Panel Review Ranking and Alignment Task for Reading Curricula (Appendix D) and Expert Panel Review Ranking and Alignment Task for Literacy Coaching (Appendix E). The members also completed the Pilot Feedback Questions to address any lingering gaps or clarify any confusing word choices (Appendix F).

The expert panel members' responses were compiled and analyzed. There was agreement among the members in terms of their selection and ranking of five most important reading curricula practices and literacy coach practices. For example, all the members ranked "uses student data to inform instruction" as either the most or second most important reading curricula practice. "[B]alance direct instruction, guided instruction, and independent learning" came in as the second most important practice. There was more variation in terms of the ranking of literacy coach practices. For example, two members indicated that the most important practice relates to "clear understanding/plan for how district will implement a literacy plan and/or core program" while another member determined that whether a "coach receives district-wide support" was the most important practice. The lack of agreement might have stemmed from the fact that two of the members had only cursory exposure to literacy coach programs while the majority of members have been deeply engaged in implementing coach programs during this last decade.

Finally, the members matched pre-selected survey questions with particular best practices of curricula or coaching. This alignment task did indicate similar agreement. I used the expert panel review members' input and current research to select which answer choices might illustrate best practices. In the end, the ranking and alignment process helped to confirm the survey's validity. After examining the written feedback, I adjusted questions' wording and included additional answer choices but did not substantially alter the surveys' content or form. Finally, I sent a follow up thank you letter with a lottery ticket enclosed to show appreciation (Appendix G).

The second stage of the pilot phase focused on determining the reliability of the instrument. Reliability is a characteristic of the instrument itself so that a study can produce scores from the survey instrument which are "stable and consistent" (Creswell, 2005, p.162). Questions that are poorly worded can be confusing and weaken the survey instrument. Pilot testing provided an opportunity to detect and remedy any potential problems with the instrument. In general, these problems may include questions that respondents do not understand, ambiguous questions, questions that combine two or more issues in a single question, or questions that make respondents uncomfortable.

This stage of the pilot process included another "dry-run" of the web-based electronic survey to determine problems with both content and logistics of the survey. Specifically, this aspect of the pilot process required participants to offer feedback not only on the clarity of the actual instrument items, but also on the design and ease for the user. This step involved piloting the survey with people in similar positions as the study's potential participants as opposed to the expert panel members.

Two pilot members were current curriculum directors from South Carolina. This decision was reached since education faculty and doctoral committee members maintain positive collegial ties to several districts in the state and the participants would not be likely to receive the real survey again as members of the sample. Finally, it is a state familiar with literacy coaches. The additional pilot member was a former curriculum director from North Carolina who worked in both coastal and mountain districts. I sent an initial invitation letter along with a lottery ticket as an incentive and token of appreciation to each pilot member (Appendix H). After approximately five days, I e-mailed a notification letter and survey link to the pilot participants (Appendix I). After a one-week interval, I sent an additional survey link to the pilot members inviting them to take the survey a second time in order to complete the test-retest process.

Results showed a high degree of correspondence between the initial survey responses and the retest responses with 99% agreement across items and people. There was evidence of consistency across questions and no evidence of skipped questions. The pilot participants did include individualized responses in the items with text box; I acknowledge that this enthusiasm and care for detail might be more a reflection of loyalty to the doctoral student or university and not a true reflection of the survey instrument's effectiveness. The feedback from the pilot feedback questions was positive in terms of the surveys' ease of use and technical access. These results indicated that efforts to reduce survey errors and participant fatigue and to remove biased or subjective scoring items were successful. Based on the pilots' feedback, two survey items were reworded to simplify responses.

The validation process provided an opportunity to cross-check the pilot participants' responses. There was evidence of internal structure when examining the response patterns of participants between similar items. For example, the survey asked the participant to define the basic components of the district's reading curricula and then select a general label for the curricula using common terms, such as phonics-based, whole language, or balanced literacy. This design feature helped to determine whether answers reinforced one another in order to accurately state particular inferences or relationships about a district's curricular approach. While the sample size was small, the contributions of each member of the pilot phase helped to improve and prepare the survey instrument for a successful launch.

One additional step taken to insure a high return rate of valid responses involved calling the 115 school districts in order to verify the districts' website accuracy. Each school district maintains a web-page with updated contact information from which curriculum directors' names, mailing address, and e-mail addresses can be obtained. A school district representative, typically the administrative assistant, confirmed the name of the district's elementary curriculum director and his/her e-mail address.

Student Achievement Data

This study used archival North Carolina End of Grade (EOG) reading achievement data. Although more authentic, performance-based data, such as running records or reading inventories, exist in some districts, North Carolina's EOG reading scores are currently the only form of a consistent, state-wide measure for upper elementary reading achievement. Technical reports from North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI, 1996) reveal that the test data are indeed reliable, accurate,

and represent a true score. According to the NCDPI's website, the North Carolina EOG Tests are designed to measure student performance on the goals, objectives, and grade-level competencies specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. The reading test consists of a variety of reading passages and multiple choice questions. It includes informational and fictional texts, with the majority being non-fiction. The questions represent four main categories of thinking including cognition, interpretation, critical stance, and connections. The regular administration of the 50-item reading test takes place during a 115 minute period in mid-May. Although literacy coaching impacts other content areas, in order to find the most immediate impact of reading curricula and coaching models, this study focuses on the achievement data from the EOG Reading Test.

After a student completes the EOG Reading Test, it is graded with computer scanning technology and a report is issued with the students' scale score showing the student's developmental scale score in reading. The raw score shows the number of correct answers. The raw score is then converted to a developmental scale score. The developmental scale score depicts growth in reading achievement from year to year and corresponds to the following achievement levels: Level I indicating that a student does not have sufficient mastery of grade-level material; Level II indicating that a student has inconsistent mastery of grade-level material; Level III indicating that a student consistently demonstrates mastery of grade-level material; and Level IV indicating that the student is performing in a superior manner beyond proficiency (NCDPI, 1999). The district and state average scale scores are based on the scores of all eligible North Carolina students taking the appropriate grade-level test in the norming year. The state

computes the overall proficiency rates of students achieving Level III or above in reading for third through eighth grades.

Validity and reliability of test data. According to the technical reports prepared by the state's Department of Public Instruction, the EOG reading test demonstrates evidence of validity by providing content relevance, response processes, and relationship of scores with other external variables. In the development phases of test construction, items that showed no bias due to gender or ethnicity/race were identified and subsequently included in the tests (NCDPI, 1996, p. 47). Additionally, in 2009, the North Carolina EOG testing program measured the test's reliability by examining the range of internal consistency coefficients which fell into an acceptable region of 0.87 to 0.92. Standard error of measurement was two or three points for students with scores within two standard deviations from the mean; and four to six points for students with scores that fell outside two standard deviations from the mean (NCDPI, 2009).

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has collected and published test data since the initial North Carolina's accountability tests in 1996. This study examined districts' achievement trends across a four-year period. The year before the district implemented the current reading curricula was identified as a baseline year and then the following three years of achievement data was considered Year One, Year Two, and Year Three of implementation. Since districts all had different baseline years, it was necessary to collect initially nine years of data starting in the 2001-0 school year and ending in the 2009-10 school year compiled by the NC School Report Cards website (<http://www.ncreportcards.org>).

While an examination of school-level achievement data would be interesting, this study focused on the impact of district-level decisions about curricula and coaching models. Although primary students' literacy achievement can be measured with the state's K-2 Assessment, the purpose of this study was to examine upper elementary reading achievement. If a district indicated that a primary coach as well as elementary coach works in classrooms, the assumption can be made that over time the coach program's impact would be noted in the increasing achievement levels of third to fifth grade students across time.

Finally, this study separated the third, fourth, and fifth grade proficiency rates rather than collapsing them into one composite score. The proficiency rate is defined as the percentage of students in the selected district who scored at or above Level III on the Reading EOG. This decision was made in order to identify possible trends over time. However, in order to compare the district to the state's reading proficiency rate, the district scores represent a combination of third through eighth grades for "Economically Disadvantaged" (ED) students. Data from students from lower socio-economic households, or ED students, are only published as a composite proficiency percentage for third through eighth grade student achievement. Arguably these data are valid and can be included because any progress by the district to increase reading achievement would, over time, impact the percentage of "at or above grade readers" across the six year grade span.

Data Collection Procedures

This research study used two primary data collection procedures: distributing a web-based survey and retrieval of archival data. The overall sequence for the data collection procedure was simple and streamlined (see Figure 3.1).

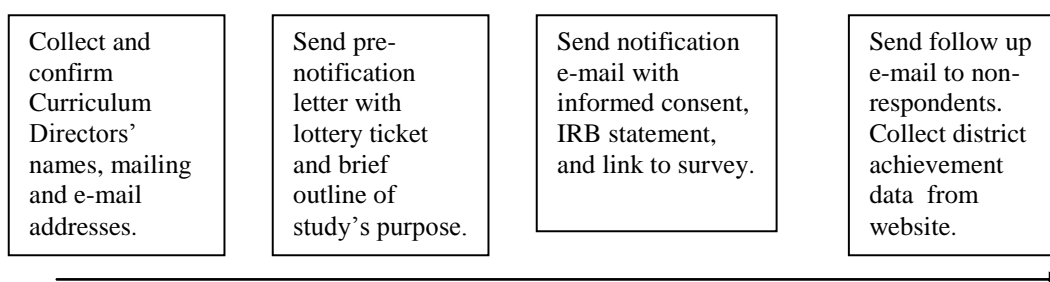


Figure 3.1. Flow chart for data collection

Implementing the Survey Instrument

The following section describes the steps involved in implementing the survey. First, personalized pre-notification letters were sent to each of the 115 curriculum directors. The letter briefly outlined the purpose of the study and requested the directors' participation to develop a more accurate picture of North Carolina's coaching and reading landscape (Appendix J). A pre-notification letter is critical with e-mail surveys since a solo e-mail may be considered solicitation and be quickly deleted (Mehta & Sivadas, 1995). The pre-notification letter encouraged participants to respond in a timely fashion (Groves et al., 1992). In order to reduce issues of non-response I appealed to participants' values and inherent support of a topic according to Blau (as cited in Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). The curriculum directors likely did have a vested interest in teacher development and student achievement. The directors also may have looked favorably to having their district included in a state-wide study.

The pre-notification letter included a small monetary token incentive, a single NC Education Lottery ticket, to build the participants' motivation and to increase response rates (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). Lottery tickets benefit North Carolina schools and also represented a bit of entertaining chance to boost respondent rates. Lottery tickets come in a range of prices; 115 one dollar lottery tickets were purchased and used as a preliminary token of appreciation.

A week later, the notification e-mail was sent to the directors' work e-mail. This communication included the essential elements of an informed consent, including risks and benefits of the study, the faculty advisor contact, the IRB statement, and a statement of appreciation for their willingness to participate (Appendix K). The e-mail included a link to the Reading Curricula Survey along with instructions to complete the survey within a three week period. I checked the daily status of the data collection in order to receive a signal that a respondent exited the survey early and left contact information for an alternate contact for the Literacy Coach Survey. I sent the newly designated participant a pre-notification letter and emailed the participant with the survey link.

Curriculum directors typically work 11 months taking vacations in July and then preparing for the return of school in August. The data collection window was open from August 1st through the end of September in order to accommodate the curriculum directors' busy schedules. In late August, the participants received an e-mail notifying them of a deadline extension as well as a thank you to those who had completed the survey (Appendix L). Again, after Labor Day, a follow up e-mail serving as a final plea was sent to those who had not completed the survey (Appendix M).

These data collection steps, the pre-notification letter (with lottery incentive), the e-mail notification and link to a user-friendly survey, and the inclusion my e-mail and phone number, facilitated efforts to boost response rates. The salience of the issues, student reaching achievement and professional development, and the follow up e-mails were all respected methods to boost response rates (Bean & Roszkowski, 1995; Sheehan & Hoy, 1997; Sheehan & McMillan, 1999). Efforts to gain a high return rate were not unrealistic. In fact, the use of electronic survey typically brings response rates in the 40%, 50%, or 60% range which can be considered average, good, or very good, respectively (Hamilton, 2003).

Student Achievement Data

As discussed earlier, EOG reading test data were collected from the comprehensive North Carolina School Report Card website (www.ncreportcards.org). This site provides links to data about all 115 districts through a site map and archives achievement data starting with the 2000-2001 school year to the present. The site also includes district-level data on particular subgroups of students which proved helpful when examining the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level from the district's ED subgroup as compared to the state average.

The retrieval process included transferring the data through basic data entry, by a graduate assistant, from the website to a research-created Excel document. Each school district had one record to cover all three grades spanning each of the nine years as well as the district percentage of ED students who scored at or above Level III. Cross-checking every tenth entry by an additional data input person insured accuracy. Speaking on the

phone with the statewide coordinator for the NC School Report Cards also helped to ensure a clear understanding of the data collected.

Data Analysis

This section defines the variables examined in this study and summarizes the various statistical tools used to analyze the collected data. The research questions in this study required a variety of statistical analyses. This section also outlines the steps used to analyze survey response and the reading achievement archival data.

Descriptive Analysis and Classification

After the descriptive analysis of Research Question One and Two was completed by examining participant demographics, content and logistics of both reading curricula and literacy coaching models, I created two distinct classification systems to determine an overall category to place each of the districts' reading curricula and/or literacy coaching models. The reading curricula research-based classification system was built on the assumption that a curricular model includes a district's own description of the model, the district's intention for selecting a particular model, selection of curricula materials, and the emphasis on particular instructional components. These curricular ingredients were then tied to particular survey response items as seen in the Reading Curricula Model Classification Matrix (Appendix N). In the end, a district was classified a balanced literacy model or a core-based model. If a district's response did not clearly indicate one model or the other, the district was labeled as unknown. Descriptive statistics were collected to find the range of districts classified using the aforementioned Reading Curricula Model and Literacy Coaching Model Classification Matrices.

The literacy coaching research-based classification system was built on the assumption that a professional development model can be classified after considering the district's reason and goal for establishing the model, the assigned main duties of the literacy coaches, and the district's expectations for a literacy coach's role in terms of implementing the district's reading curricula. These aspects were then tied to particular survey response items as seen in the Literacy Coaching Model Classification Matrix (Appendix O). In the end, a district was classified as having a responsive model or a directive model. If a district's response did not clearly indicate one model or the other, the district was labeled as unknown.

Best Practice Scoring

In order to answer Question Three response items were weighted as best practice elements according to research on professional development and reading curricula by the National Reading Panel, the International Reading Association, and the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse, as well as from the study's expert panel member contributions. Specifically, particular survey items and responses were point-generating. Once survey items and responses were aligned, the new Best Practice variables were computed for nine elements as well as an overall Best Practice Reading Curricula score (Appendix P) and Best Practice Literacy Coaching score (Appendix Q). The range of possible best practice values for the reading curricula was from 2 to 66 points and from 4 to 91 points for the literacy coaching models.

In order to answer Research Question Four districts that completed both surveys were examined. Their classification for both reading curricula and literacy coach models

were totaled and placed in a cross tabulation matrix. Patterns that might indicate a presence or lack of association between models were examined and analyzed.

Reading Achievement Data

In order to answer Research Question Five the dependent variable was defined as the districts' third, fourth, and fifth grade achievement proficiency rates across four years. Since each district had a different starting point, the archival data stretched from 2001 to 2010. Grade level deviation scores were computed by subtracting a district's percentage of students scoring at or above Level III (indicating proficiency) from the state's average grade level proficiency rate. This number was either negative, indicating the district proficiency rate fell below the state's average, or positive, indicating the district was above the state average.

The implementation date of a district's curricula and/or literacy coach program informed which year of student achievement data would be considered a baseline or post-implementation. The year before a district's implementation was considered the baseline while the following three years were considered Year One, Year Two, and Year Three of implementation. This span of years allowed for an examination of trends in pre-post implementation of coaching as the earliest models of literacy coaching in North Carolina elementary schools started in 2002. In addition, reading curricula's incorporation of elements from the pivotal National Reading Panel's 2000 Report and current best practices in reading strategies did not take full effect until approximately 2002.

In order to analyze the largest representation of districts according to reading curricula models, I imputed the proficiency rates for four districts out of the total forty. For example, 10 districts were classified as implementing a balanced literacy model. The

achievement data for these districts were available for the baseline year and Year One and Year Two. However, since one of the districts recently implemented balanced literacy, it did not have EOG data for three consecutive years. The district's previous achievement data appeared stable; therefore this district was a good candidate for imputation. I averaged the first two years of proficiency rates during the curriculum implementation and used that new number to impute Year Three's proficiency rate. I followed this process for two districts classified as unknown and for one core-based district. In order to analyze the largest representation of districts possible for literacy coaching classifications, I similarly imputed the mean proficiency rates for three different districts. Again, this step was necessary in order to preserve the sample.

In order to answer Research Question Six, data for the ED students are presented as a composite score for overall proficiency of the reading achievement for third through eighth grades. The state does not provide individual subgroup data for each elementary grade level. Deviation percentages therefore were computed using the state's composite average and the district's composite average for each relevant school year for the district and state.

Table 3.1 summarizes the different research questions, data, and statistical analyses completed during this study. With six different research questions it was important to streamline the data analyses as much as possible. Several of the original ideas for data analysis were revised to reflect the data that were collected.

Table 3.1

Research Question Analyses Matrix

Research Questions	Data/Evidence	Statistical Analysis
Q 1 reading curricula models	Reading Curricula Survey responses	Reading Curricula Model Classification Matrix; descriptive statistics and frequencies; confidence intervals
Q 2 literacy coaching models	Literacy Coaching Survey responses	Literacy Coaching Model Classification Matrix; descriptive statistics and frequencies; confidence intervals
Q 3 to what extent do models reflect best practices	Best Practice Element variable(s) computed for each district using embedded survey responses	descriptive statistics, frequencies
Q 4 patterns in type of literacy coach models and reading curricula	Best Practice Element variable(s) and Reading Curricula and Literacy Coaching Model Classification Matrices	descriptive statistics, frequencies, and cross tabulations
Q 5 associations between coaching models, reading curricula models, and student reading achievement	Associations described between achievement and a particular Reading Curriculum or Literacy Coaching model	descriptive statistics, frequencies, and box plots
Q 6 associations between coaching models, reading curricula models, and student reading achievement of ED students	Associations described between ED student achievement and a particular Reading Curriculum or Literacy Coaching model	descriptive statistics, frequencies, and cross tabulations

Research Questions Five and Six examined the following operational hypothesis:

Districts that implement research-based, best practice reading curricula and literacy coach programs may exhibit greater reading achievement growth over time. Descriptive

statistics were computed and examined as well as the creation of line graphs to determine any possible associations with increased or decreased student reading achievement.

The relationships discovered in the analysis of the quantitative data led to inferences about which different instructional models, both for reading and coaching, are associated with increased student reading achievement scores across the four-year period. These inferences allowed me to identify reading curricula and literacy coach models in North Carolina public elementary schools that appear to impact student achievement as measured by the EOG test data.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Overview

In North Carolina, each school district is responsible for selecting its own reading curricula (materials and methods) and professional development models. The purpose of this study was first to identify the upper elementary reading curricula implemented in North Carolina's elementary schools and how a model may be associated with student reading achievement measured by the End of Grade reading test. The second purpose of this study was to identify any upper elementary literacy coaching models being implemented and their association with student reading achievement.

Chapter Four presents the survey responses collected from school districts' curriculum directors. The chapter starts with respondents' demographic information. Next, the responses identifying districts' particular model of curricula and coaching are examined. These data are used to answer the study's first two research questions:

1. What are the different reading curricula models used in North Carolina's districts in the third, fourth, and fifth grades?
2. What are the different literacy coaching models used in North Carolina's districts in the third, fourth, and fifth grades?

Chapter Four then examines to what degree best practices are reflected in the reading and coaching programs as well as how they are interconnected in order to answer the following research questions:

3. To what extent do these models reflect best practices according to guidelines established by the International Reading Association, the National Reading Panel, and the Literacy Coach Clearinghouse?
4. Are there patterns in the type of reading curricula models and literacy coaching models that districts implement?

Finally, the chapter closes by using reading achievement data from the North Carolina School Report Cards to answer the remaining two research questions:

5. What associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and third, fourth, and fifth grade reading achievement trends in North Carolina in a four-year period?
6. What associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and achievement trends for the subgroup of “Economically Disadvantaged” students in a four-year period?

Demographic Information of the Sample

This study collected data from two researcher-created survey instruments. The Reading Curricula Survey was sent to all 115 curriculum directors. This initial survey served as a gateway for the follow up Literacy Coaching Survey. The response rate for the Reading Curricula Survey was 35% ($n = 40$). North Carolina’s 115 school districts are divided into the State Board of Education Regions (SBOER; Appendix R). The Reading Curricula Survey respondents represented all eight regions. The western and eastern regions of North Carolina had the largest representation; each had 23% ($n = 9$) of the responding districts. Seven out of the eight SBOER were represented in responses to the Literacy Coach Survey; forty-eight percent ($n = 5$) were from the eastern regions.

One district in the central region of the state was not permitted to participate in either survey per district policy.

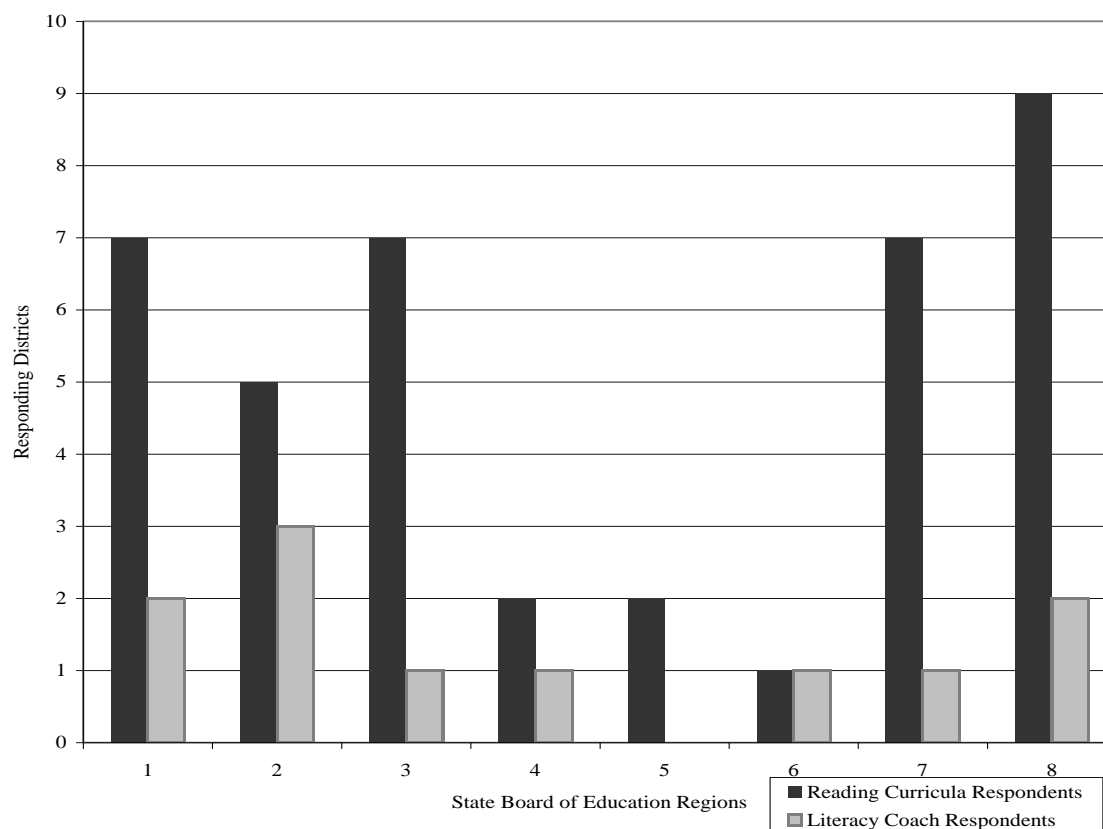


Figure 4.1 Responding Districts from the State Board of Education Regions

Of those respondents completing the Reading Curricula Survey, approximately 68% ($n = 27$) had more than five years of experience working in the particular district. The average length of employment within the district was 9.08 years ($SD = 4.01$). The average length of employment in the position of curriculum director was five years ($SD = 3.55$). Approximately 25% ($n = 10$) had worked for more than five years in their current position of curriculum director.

The response rate for the Literacy Coaching Survey is complex. Out of the 115 districts surveyed, 17% ($n = 20$) responded and indicated that they had literacy coach

models. Although 50% ($n = 20$) of the original Reading Curricula respondents indicated having a literacy coaching program in their district, only eleven chose to enter the Literacy Coaching Survey. Of those respondents approximately 64% ($n = 7$) had more than ten years of experience working in the particular district. Approximately 9% ($n = 1$) had worked for more than ten years in their current position of curriculum director, whereas, 55% ($n = 6$) had worked for only one year in their current position. The length of time for respondents holding the curriculum director position was, on average, 3.73 years ($SD = 3.95$).

Analysis of Results

Question One: Type of Reading Curricula Models

This section will answer Research Question One with regard to types of reading curricula being implemented in North Carolina's elementary schools. Curricula are difficult to categorize; I used a collection of survey items to gather the respondents' descriptions of their reading curricula in terms of intended purpose, purchased materials, and selected instructional methods. After examining the results from these particular survey items, this section ends by classifying the districts into one of three distinct reading curricula models.

The survey found that 70% ($n = 28$) of the respondents selected "central office" and 53% ($n = 21$) selected "principal" as the most likely entity to help with selecting a district's reading curricula. The "school board" ($n = 1$) was the least frequent selection. Interestingly, 90% ($n = 36$) of the districts implemented their curriculum selection as a district-wide adoption; in other words, the selection and implementation of a particular reading curriculum occur for an entire district.

Sixty-six percent ($n = 27$) indicated that the current reading curricula had been in place for more than three years with the average length being 5.56 years ($SD = 1.80$). Fifty-five percent ($n = 22$) of the respondents indicated that the current selection represented a change in the approach to reading instruction from the past years and 88% ($n = 35$) indicated that the district had participated recently in district-wide reform initiatives that might impact reading achievement. More than a third, ($n = 15$, 38%), of the respondents indicated that the change in curricula occurred in the last four years, starting in the 2006-07 school year.

The survey asked respondents to group the factors used in selecting curricula according to being either “most” or “least” important. Table 4.1 captures the various factors that districts used to select reading curricula. All the districts ($n = 40$) selected “aligns with Standard Course of Study” which indicated all participating districts’ explicit goal to follow the state’s required curricula standards. Ninety percent ($n = 36$) of the respondents indicated that “alignment of curricula with a balanced literacy approach” was most important. There was a similar high percentage of responses for “alignment with explicit comprehension strategies” ($n = 37$, 93%) and “integrates word study and phonics instruction” ($n = 35$, 88%) which are formative elements of a balanced literacy approach. A slight number of districts ($n = 3$, 8%) selected curricula that fulfills text adoption requirements of Reading First. Finally, only 5% ($n = 2$) selected “familiarity and experience with publisher” as a reason for selecting curricula.

Table 4.1

Groupings of Factors for Curricula Selection (N = 40)

Factors	Most Important		Least Important	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Alignment with Standard Course of Study (SCOS)	40	100	-	-
Evidence of scientifically-based reading instruction (SBRI)	40	100	-	-
Alignment with explicit comprehension strategies (ECS)	37	93	3	8
Alignment with balanced literacy approach (BLA)	36	90	4	10
Integrates word study and phonics instruction (WS/PI)	35	88	5	13
Alignment with phonics-based instruction (PBI)	23	58	17	43
Fulfills text adoption requirement of Reading First (RRF)	3	8	37	93
Familiarity and experience with publisher (FWP)	2	5	38	95

In addition, this two-part survey item asked respondents to rank the factors in order of importance. Table 4.2 illustrates how the districts responded when asked to consider how factors are ranked 1st–6th. Both BLA (balanced literacy approach) with 58% ($n = 28$) and ECS (explicit comprehension strategies) with 35% ($n = 14$) ranked third for factors for curricula selection.

Table 4.2

Rankings of Factors for Curricula Selection (N = 40)

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
Factors	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
SCOS	30 (75)	7 (18)	1 (3)	1 (3)	1 (3)	-	-
SBRI	9 (23)	22 (55)	1 (3)	3 (8)	4 (10)	1 (3)	-
RRF	10 (25)	19 (48)	8 (20)	1 (3)	2 (5)	-	-
BLA	1 (3)	4 (10)	23 (58)	4 (10)	3 (8)	5 (13)	-
ECS	1 (3)	6 (15)	14 (35)	13 (33)	5 (13)	1 (3)	-
PBI	6 (15)	5 (13)	5 (13)	10 (25)	5 (13)	-	2 (5)
FWP	1 (22)	5 (20)	13 (33)	-	2 (5)	-	-
WS/PI	1 (3)	1 (3)	4 (10)	12 (30)	15 (38)	6 (15)	1 (3)

Not surprisingly, the factor ranking the highest numerically was SCOS (Standard Course of Study; $n = 30$, 75%) which the Department of Public Instruction and State School Board require adherence. The SBRI (scientifically based reading instruction) was the other factor that most districts ranked second ($n = 22$, 55%) which is a common term used to describe materials that deliver a core-based approach. Before examining what curricula materials districts actually purchased, it is important to note that in North

Carolina districts can opt out of textbooks by using a waiver and using these funds for alternative curricula materials. This study found that only 15% ($n = 6$) of districts indicated using this option while more than 82% ($n = 33$) adopted a textbook series. All of the waiver-selecting districts purchased guided reading leveled book sets ($n = 6$); of these six districts, 83% ($n = 5$) purchased materials for classroom libraries and 67% ($n = 4$) purchased science/social studies trade books.

Table 4.3 captures what two approaches best describe the school district's current approach to upper elementary reading instruction, according to the survey respondent. A majority of respondents selected "balanced literacy" ($n = 24$, 60%) and "scientifically-based reading instruction" ($n = 17$, 43%). One respondent selected the "Other" category and wrote in the textbox "25 schools, 250 approaches." Respondents were also asked if their district had a literacy framework or graphic organizer to illustrate and describe their approach to reading curricula. While 13% ($n = 5$) skipped this question, 40% ($n = 16$) indicated "yes" and 48% ($n = 19$) indicated "no."

Table 4.3

Districts' Identification of Top Two Instructional Approaches (N = 40)

Approaches	<i>n</i>	%
Balanced literacy	24	60
Scientifically-based reading instruction	17	43
Research-based instruction	11	28
Scripted program	5	13
Phonics-based instruction	4	10
Direct instruction	3	8
Whole language instruction	-	-
Other	1	3

To gather more detail about curricula programs, the survey asked respondents to identify the five main instructional components forming the district's reading program in third through fifth grades (see Table 4.4). The results suggest that several key components were most frequently used to form districts' approaches.

Table 4.4

Top Five Instructional Components (N = 40)

Components	<i>n</i>	%
Guided reading instruction	33	83
90 minute literacy block	22	55
Classroom libraries	20	50
Direct instruction	16	40
Class novels	15	38
Literacy centers	14	35
Reading Workshop	10	25
Accelerated Reading (AR books)	9	23
Basal readers (text books)	9	23
Read aloud	8	20
Word work or word centers	7	18
Silent reading	6	15
Leveled individual workbooks	4	18
Phonics-based instruction	2	5

Overall, the most frequently identified component was “guided reading” ($n = 33$, 83%). The next most frequent responses were “90 minute literacy block” ($n = 22$, 55%) and “classroom libraries” ($n = 20$, 50%). These three components are prominent elements in a balanced literacy model. The guided reading and 90 minute literacy block are also

key requirements of Reading Foundations, a comprehensive reading approach being implemented in many schools across North Carolina that focuses on the lowest, struggling readers. Twenty-three percent ($n = 9$) selected “basal readers (textbooks)” as a main instructional component.

Table 4.5 examines more specifically the various types of curricula materials that districts are using. The responses were categorized into three main types of materials. One choice of materials found within the “trade books” category was Scholastic Books representing the majority of the responses ($n = 20$, 50%). Curricula materials in the category of “comprehension strategy guide books” were also favored ($n = 18$, 45%). A follow up question asked respondents if their particular district had established bookrooms to house multiple copies of leveled-books typically used for small group guided reading instruction. Almost all the respondents, 97% ($n = 37$), indicated “yes.”

In addition to collecting data about curricula’s method components and curricula materials, the *Reading Curricula Survey* asked respondents to select from a list of resources or organizations that districts use to help with reading curricula or to boost student reading achievement.

Table 4.5

Curricula Materials for Upper Elementary Reading Instruction (N = 40)

Materials	<i>n</i>	%
Comprehension strategy guide books		
Fountas & Pinnell	18	45
Harvey & Goudvis, Calkins, and Miller	18	45
Six Traits of Reading	2	5
Trade books (guided reading books)		
Scholastic Books	20	50
Wright Group	7	18
Textbook Series		
Foundations of Reading (<i>Language!</i>)	13	33
Houghton Mifflin	5	13
McGraw-Hill/SRA (Open Court, Corrective)	8	5
Scott Foresman (<i>Reading Street</i>)	4	10
Sopris West (<i>Voyager</i>)	1	<1
Steck-Vaughn	1	<1

Table 4.6 illustrates the districts' connections to various resources, beyond their connections to North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and local Regional Educational Service Alliances.

Table 4.6

Resources and Organizations Tapped to Support NC School Districts (N = 40)

Resources	<i>n</i>	%
Literacy Coaches	24	60
Educational Consultants	19	48
Local colleges/university	12	30
Reading and Writing Project at Columbia Teachers' College (Calkins)	8	20
Textbook publisher	7	18
Comprehensive School Reform	3	8
Literacy Collaborative (Pinnell & Fountas)	3	8
Reading Lady Website	3	8
Other	24	63

Sixty-three percent of the respondents indicated “other.” Of those who wrote in the textbox, 23% ($n = 9$) of the respondents listed resources which ranged from local district support such as “reading specialists,” “Reading Recovery,” “central office staff development,” and “District Literacy Team” to other outside state-specific support such as the “Hill Center” and “NCQUEST.” The other most frequent response was “literacy coaches” ($n = 24$, 60%) implying the use of district resources.

In order to answer fully Research Question One, it is important to examine results from the researcher-created Reading Curricula Classification Matrix described in Chapter Three (see Appendix N). Responses were categorized into three distinct potential reading

curricula models: balanced literacy, core-based, and unknown based on the districts' response to questions concerning selection factors, self-defined approach, actual curricula used, ranking of instructional components, and use of textbook waiver. Figure 4.2 shows the number of districts divided into the three distinct reading curricula models.

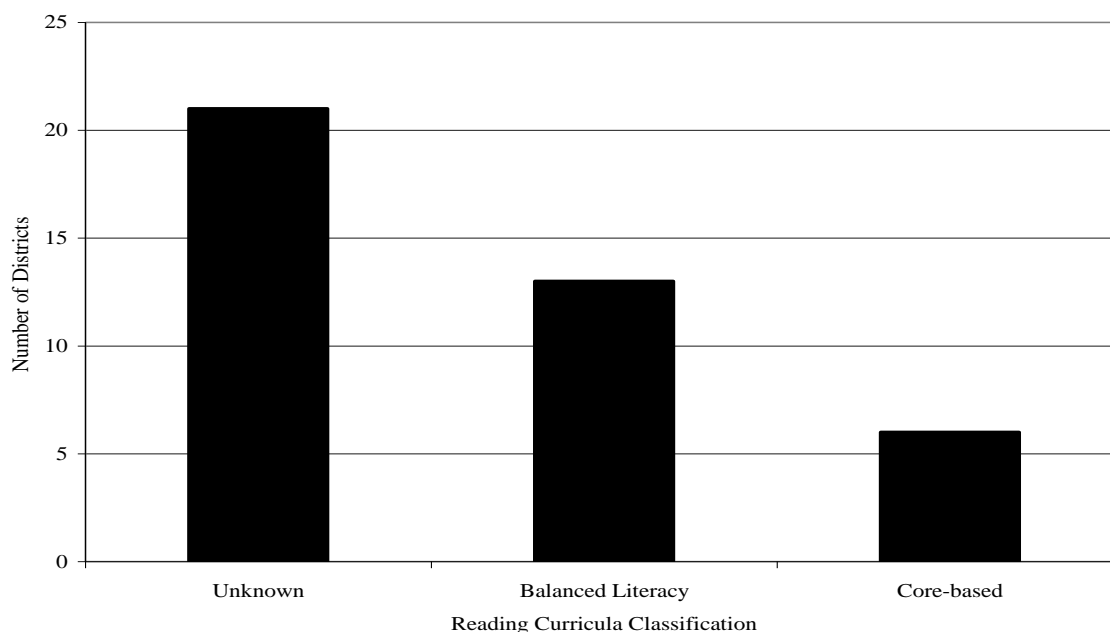


Figure 4.2. Classification of Reading Curricula Models (N = 40)

The percent of districts aligned with a balanced literacy reading curricula model is 33% ($n = 13$, 95% CI: 17.3 - 47.7). The percent of districts aligned with a core-based reading curricula model is 15% ($n = 6$, 95% CI: 3.4 - 26.6). Finally, the percent of districts classified as unknown is 53% ($n = 21$, 95% CI: 39.5 - 65.5). In other words, more than half of the districts' aligned with reading curricula models that could not be classified and were defined as unknown, neither balanced literacy nor core-based.

The final survey response item was an open-ended question providing space for respondents to share any additional information that he/she wanted the researcher to

know about the district's elementary reading program. More than a quarter of the respondents, or 28% ($n = 11$), took advantage of this opportunity to write comments which ranged in length and detail. One district stated succinctly its approach to reading: "X County Schools has a balanced literacy approach to reading." Another respondent stated, "Past 6 years grades K-3 have been Reading First Schools," perhaps in order to supplement the surveys' sole focus on upper elementary reading instruction. One respondent commented on the challenge of implementing a uniform reading approach when dealing with different groups of teachers and different populations of students: "We are trying to train our teachers in the reading process NOT a canned approach to reading. Our EC [Exceptional Children] program still supports 'canned' programs and this often leads to confusions for our teachers."

Another respondent's comments summarized the challenge and different pace of change when working with teachers' practices in various grades: "Our K-2 teachers have embraced changes necessary to incorporate evidence-based practices; 3-5 just beginning to move...much for all of us to learn!" Several respondents mentioned commitment to use "professional learning communities [PLCs]." One final comment summarizing the district's efforts is a useful stopping point, "We are working very hard to have uninterrupted literacy blocks, collaborative grade level PLCs, & using data to drive reading instruction for each child." This comment illustrates the authentic connection between instruction, curricula, and school-embedded professional development.

Question Two: Type of Literacy Coaching Models

This section will answer Research Question Two by detailing and identifying the participating types of literacy coach models. Response rates for the Literacy Coaching

Survey were smaller than the initial Reading Curricula Survey participation. Fifty percent ($n = 20$) of the districts responding to the Reading Curricula Survey had a literacy coaching program and forty-five percent ($n = 18$) of the respondents indicated being familiar enough to answer questions about the district's coaching program. One respondent did identify an alternative, more knowledgeable participant, however, efforts to solicit that alternate participant's input failed. Of those eighteen qualified respondents, 61% ($n = 11$) chose to complete the Literacy Coach Survey.

When these eleven respondents were asked to identify the position used for their title, they had different responses ranging from the expected "Director of Elementary Education" to "Director of Curriculum/Instruction and Principal of a High School." Eighty-one percent ($n = 9$) of the Literacy Coach Survey respondents had more than five years of experience working in the particular position ($M = 3.73$ years, $SD = 3.92$). Fifty-four percent ($n = 6$) had less than one year worth of experience in the current job position. The range of experience working in the district was from one year to twelve years ($M = 8.82$, $SD = 4.51$). When asked to determine what year the district phased in the elementary literacy coach program, a range of responses demonstrated the staggered nature of implementation. In the 2009-2010 school year, 28% ($n = 3$) participants implemented their literacy coaching program. Fifty-four percent ($n = 6$) of the respondents identified 2004-05 or later as the initiating phase for the district's literacy coach program. All of the respondents ($n = 11$) indicated that their district had created a description of the purpose or goal of the elementary coach program and 82% ($n = 9$) had placed the coaching program in the district's strategic plan.

With regard to data indicating the district's purpose or reason for establishing the coaching program, Table 4.7 shows 64% ($n = 7$) of respondents selected "response to low achievement scores" and 55% ($n = 6$) selected "connection to reading curricula initiative."

Table 4.7

Reasons for Establishing Literacy Coach Program (N = 11)

Main Reasons	<i>n</i>	%
Response to low achievement scores	7	64
Connected to reading curricula initiative	6	55
Tied to Reading First grant	4	37
Need for faculty development	3	25
In response to superintendent initiative	2	18

Thirty six percent ($n = 4$) indicated that the coaching program was "tied to Reading First grants." These monies typically provide funding for a Reading First Coach along with a text book adoption list with required reading curricula materials.

The Literacy Coach Survey respondents ranked their reasons for creating the coaching program according to levels of importance. Table 4.8 shows the rankings for these reasons. The idea of "improve student achievement" ($n = 8$) was identified most frequently as the first goal for establishing the literacy coaching program. The reason "create in-house professional development," ranked fourth by 55% ($n = 6$) of the respondents.

Table 4.8

<i>Goals for Establishing Coaching Program (N = 11)</i>						
Goals	Ranking					
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Improve Student Achievement	8 (73)	1 (9)	-	-	-	2 (18)
Improve Teacher Quality	-	1 (9)	6 (55)	2 (18)	1 (9)	1 (9)
Create in-house professional development	-	1 (9)	3 (27)	6 (55)	1 (9)	-
Increase teacher retention	-	1 (9)	4 (36)	5 (46)	1 (9)	-
Evaluate teacher growth	-	2 (18)	2 (18)	4 (36)	2 (18)	1 (9)
Meet reading first requirements	2 (18)	-	-	-	2 (18)	7 (64)

The survey responses that shed light on the basic details and logistics of each district's literacy coaching program revealed a range of one to fourteen coaches to a district system ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 5.01$). Approximately 64% ($n = 7$) of the respondents assigned literacy coaches to a single school site. More than 70% ($n = 8$) indicated that their coaches work with 10 or more teachers at one time. The average number of teachers assigned to a single coach was just under ten ($M = 8.36$, $SD = 3.23$). More than 50%

($n = 6$) of the respondents identify the coaches as “instructional coach” while 46% ($n = 5$) use the term “literacy coach.”

Table 4.9 shows the employment qualifications required in order to serve as a coach. These qualifications indicate the districts’ varying expectations.

Table 4.9

Employment Qualification Requirements for Literacy Coaches (N = 11)

Qualification Requirements	<i>n</i>	%
North Carolina teaching license	11	100
Experience providing professional development	8	73
Minimum 5 years teaching experience	8	73
Masters Degree	3	28
Mentoring experience	3	28
Reading certificate	3	28
National Board certificate	2	18
Reading Recovery certificate	2	18

The data show that all responding districts require a North Carolina teaching license ($n = 11$, 100%). The next most frequent response was related to length of teaching experience ($n = 8$, 73%). The requirements of having been a mentor, holding a reading certificate or having a Masters degree all received 28% ($n = 3$) of the responses.

Professional development opportunities provided to coaches was another area for inquiry. All of the respondents indicated that their districts provided opportunities for the literacy coaches to attend coach-specific professional development including regular meetings with the district's other coaches. The range of days set aside for professional development ranged from four to eight for the participating districts ($M = 7.18$ years, $SD = 1.47$). The frequency and form of these opportunities are displayed in Table 4.10. It appears that 73% ($n = 8$) responding districts provide "more than a week" of professional development for the coaches. The typical purposes of the weekly coach meetings that received 100% ($n = 11$) were "planning future PD sessions for teachers" and "problem solving." Interestingly, "paperwork and scheduling" was selected by only 18% ($n = 2$) of the districts.

There were several different avenues identified for assigning teachers to coaches. Almost half of the respondents (45%, $n = 5$) indicated that the "principal assigns coach to teacher." While 18% ($n = 2$) indicated that the "lead coach selects to work with a teacher" and 18% ($n = 2$) indicated that the coach was assigned "...to an entire grade level," one respondent indicated that teachers might request a coach. In terms of the duration of a coaching relationship, 45% ($n = 5$) indicated that coaches are assigned to a teacher for one school year. One respondent indicated that coaches are assigned to work for "one day," while another respondent selected "one week" with a teacher. The other 36% ($n = 4$) of respondents selected the "Other" option and offered similar descriptions in the text box including "as long as necessary" or "as needed."

Table 4.10

Professional Development Opportunities and Purpose of Weekly Meetings (N = 11)

PD Opportunities	<i>n</i>	%
Frequency of coach PD within a year		
More than a week	8	73
More than 5 days	1	9
More than 4 days	1	9
More than 3 days	1	9
Typical purpose of weekly meetings with other coaches		
Planning future PD session for teachers	11	100
Problem solving	11	100
Developing coaching techniques	9	82
Sharing resources	9	82
Paperwork and scheduling	2	18

The survey asked respondents about the various ways coaches, once assigned to a teacher, interact and how they serve as a district support person. To learn more about the basic duties of the coach, the survey asked the respondents to select the five main duties that occupy most of the coaches' time. Table 4.11 indicates that the main duties include "models instructional methods" or "offers formal professional development sessions," 82% for both respectively.

Table 4.11

Most Time Consuming Coach Duties (N = 11)

Duties	<i>n</i>	%
Models instructional methods	9	82
Offers formal professional development sessions	9	82
Disaggregates student data	7	64
Conferring with teachers	6	55
Attends grade-level meetings	5	45
Co-teaches with classroom teacher	4	36
Facilitates grade-level meetings	3	27
Models reflection and self-assessment	3	27
Attends professional development	1	9
Performs student diagnostic assessments	1	9
Assists administrator with observations	1	9
Tutors small student groups	1	9
Assists administrator with evaluations	-	-

The data indicate that the coaches' forms of interactions within schools are varied.

Only one respondent indicated that coaches assist administrators with observations.

Table 4.12 shows the various tasks that coaches accomplish in order to implement a district's elementary reading program. The most frequent was "provide professional development" ($n = 10, 91\%$).

Table 4.12

Main Coaching Tasks (N = 11)

Tasks	<i>n</i>	%
Provide professional development	10	91
Disaggregate student data	7	64
Model use of curriculum materials	7	64
Monitor implementation across classrooms	7	64
Help teachers select curriculum materials	2	18

Interestingly 64% ($n = 7$) indicated that coaches “monitor implementation across classrooms” but no respondent selected “evaluate teachers’ use of program.” Perhaps the term “monitor” and “evaluate” hold different meanings in a coaching context. Coaches reportedly meet with teachers on a regular basis. The survey results indicate that 64% ($n = 7$) of the districts’ coaches meet with teachers by grade levels and 9% ($n = 1$) of the coaches meet teachers in study groups.

The reported topics covered during the coach and teacher meetings are displayed in Table 4.13. While the actual content of coaching conversations is not the focus of this study, Table 4.13 shows the most frequent topic covered was “examining student data” ($n = 10$, 91%) and “co-planning” ($n = 9$, 82%).

Table 4.13

Topics Covered in Teacher-Coach Meetings (N = 11)

Topics	<i>n</i>	%
Examining student data	10	91
Co-planning	9	82
Sharing curricula resources	8	73
Modeling new instructional practices	7	64
Reading common book	3	27

Table 4.14 shows that 82% ($n = 9$) of the respondents indicated “comprehension” was the most frequent reading process emphasized by coaches. Interestingly, only 9% ($n = 1$) of the respondents selected “phonemic awareness.”

Table 4.14

Aspects of Reading Instruction (N = 11)

Aspects	<i>n</i>	%
Comprehension	9	82
Vocabulary	4	36
Fluency	3	27
Phonics/Word Skills	2	18
Phonemic Awareness	1	9

Only 18% ($n = 2$) selected “phonics/word skills” supporting the earlier data which indicated that upper elementary coaches work with comprehension. The emphasis on phonemic awareness was minimal ($n = 1$, 9%) which is not surprising for an upper elementary coach models but might be different when examining primary-based coaching models.

As the data suggest coaches have various roles and duties in schools. The survey asked respondents to indicate if the coaches are required to follow a set of steps for interacting with teachers, for example, a set of steps for pre-observations, curricula planning, and reflecting and de-briefing after a more formal observation. The respondents were split in their responses with 46% ($n = 5$) indicating that “yes” the coaches do follow steps to guide their coaching interactions, while 55% ($n = 6$) indicated “no.”

Table 4.15 details the types and order of interactions coaches have with teachers. The steps that were most often named as first or second in the sequence were “pre-observation,” “analyze student data,” and “collaborative planning.” The survey asked respondents how coaches typically communicate with teachers and whether the literacy coaches are required to keep logs and for what purpose.

Table 4.15

Steps for Coach Interactions (N = 11)

Interactions	Steps						
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Pre-observation	3 (27)	2 (18)	3 (27)	2 (18)	-	-	-
Observation	1 (9)	-	3 (27)	4 (36)	2 (18)	-	-
Feedback	-	-	-	3 (27)	5 (46)	1 (9)	1 (9)
Collaborative planning	3 (27)	1 (9)	3 (27)	-	1 (9)	2 (18)	-
Analyze student data	4 (36)	4 (36)	-	1 (9)	-	-	1 (9)
Reflection	-	-	-	-	-	4 (36)	6 (55)
Problem solving	-	2 (18)	1 (9)	-	2 (18)	3 (27)	2 (18)

While it is not surprising that e-mail was selected by all respondents, it is interesting to note that additional informal forms of communication were also prevalent (see Table 4.16). All respondents indicated that their coaches use communication logs to keep a record of their time. More than half, ($n = 7$, 64%) of respondents indicated that their coaches use logs to “record coach reflections” and 45% ($n = 5$) indicated that the

logs were used to inventory services delivered. Likewise 64% ($n = 7$) indicated that coaches use logs to monitor teachers' fidelity to the curricula program.

Table 4.16

Forms of Coach Communication with Teachers (N = 11)

Format	<i>n</i>	%
E-mail	11	100
Regular meeting	10	91
Sticky notes	10	91
Informal/ad-hoc meeting	9	82
Observation forms	8	73
Template-based feedback forms	7	64
Phone	4	36

Regarding the various sources for funding, 100% ($n = 11$) of the respondents indicated using federal Title I funds. Thirty-six percent ($n = 4$) indicated the additional allocation of district level funds, possibly suggesting local support given to coaching initiatives. Only 18% ($n = 2$) indicated the use of school-based funds to support coaching programs. More than half ($n = 6$, 56%) of the respondents indicated that their district's literacy coach program followed a particular model. Of these respondents three national models of coaching were identified. Twenty-seven percent ($n = 3$) of respondents indicated Cognitive Coaching. Based on the work of Costa and Garmston (2002), Cognitive Coaching "...is a process, a set of strategies, and a way of thinking that

supports the ongoing development of individuals as they become increasingly self-directed and reflective” (<http://www.cognitivecoaching.com/>). The Literacy Collaborative, a professional development model developed at Ohio University based on the work Pinnell and Fountas (2006), was selected by one participant ($n = 1$, 9%). Reading First, the federally supported reading program that includes a teacher coach to monitor and support the implementation of scientifically-based reading instruction which typically involves an approved core text (basal series), was cited by 9% ($n = 1$) of the respondents. One North Carolina state-based coaching program, NCREADS, was identified by 9% ($n = 1$) of the respondents. NCREADS, an online development program that trains teachers through 80 hours of online learning, works in conjunction with Reading First.

Having reported on each of the survey’s response items, it is now important to examine how the districts’ literacy coach programs were classified using the researcher-created Literacy Coaching Classification System described in Chapter Three (see Appendix O). Responses were categorized into three distinct potential literacy coaching models: responsive, directive, and unknown, according to their purpose and goals for establishing program, coaches’ main duties, and the ways the coach implements the districts’ reading curricula. The results from this classification system indicated that the proportion of districts aligned with a responsive coaching model is 73% ($n = 8$, 95% CI: 46.4 - 99.1). The remaining proportion of districts was aligned with an unknown coaching model is 27% ($n = 3$, 95% CI: 1.0 - 53.6). None of the participating districts fit the directive classification. Figure 4.3 illustrates the results from the classification process.

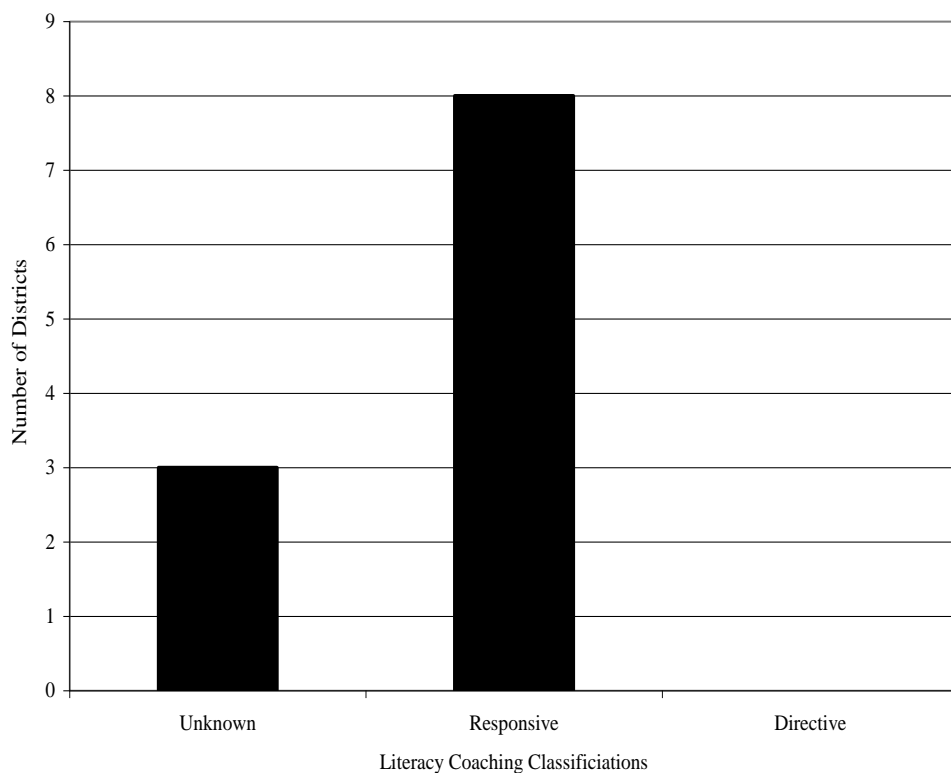


Figure 4.3. Classification of Literacy Coaching Models

Question Three: Reflection of Best Practices in Models

This section of Chapter Four describes to what degree the respondents' reading curricula and literacy coaching models reflect current best practices according to guidelines established by the International Reading Association, the National Reading Panel, and the Literacy Coach Clearinghouse. Nine key elements of best practice for reading curricula and literacy coaching were established and aligned with particular point-generating survey item responses (see Chapter Three for further discussion). Table 4.17 examines the presence of the nine best practice elements in the districts' reading curricula.

Table 4.17

Best Practice Scores for District's Reading Curricula (N = 40)

Best Practice Elements	<i>n</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
#1 Includes 5 Explicit Comprehension Reading Instruction (ECRI)	40	4	9	5.47	1.90
#2 Emphasizes quality literature	40	3	8	4.62	1.76
#3 Uses student data to inform instruction	40	3	6	3.77	1.44
#4 Access to leveled-book collection	40	2	6	3.27	1.39
#5 Includes variety of genres	40	2	5	2.97	1.18
#6 Includes independent reading time	40	4	7	5.07	1.57
#7 Includes explicit comprehension strategy lessons	40	3	8	4.64	1.76
#8 Balances direct and guided instruction, and independent learning	40	4	9	5.47	1.90
#9 Integrates comprehensive WS/P into reading/writing instruction	40	3	8	4.60	1.69

The mean best practice scores range from 2.97 ($SD = 1.2$) for Element Five “includes variety of genres” to Element One’s “includes ECRI” and Element Eight’s “balances instruction” mean scores of 5.47 ($SD = 1.9$). In order to assign a score indicating the combined presence of best practices in each district, an overall score was computed by adding the values of each of the nine elements together for a maximum possible score of 66.

Table 4.18 shows the results from this calculation. There was a wide range of scores from 8 to 66 ($M = 39.90$; $SD = 14.15$; 95% CI: 35.4 - 44.4). Thirteen percent ($n =$

5) of the districts indicated using reading curricula models that captured low best practice scores well below the average. This data was then used to examine to what extent specific reading models reflected best practice scores. These best practice scores according to the classification of the curricula model indicates some differences in reading models.

Table 4.18

Overall Reading Curricula Best Practices (N = 40)

Range of Scores	<i>n</i>	%
0-11	2	5
12-22	3	8
23-33	5	13
34-44	17	43
45-55	6	15
56-66	7	18

Figure 4.4 offers an additional look at the overall best practice scores according to the three different curricula models. The range of best practices is interesting to compare.

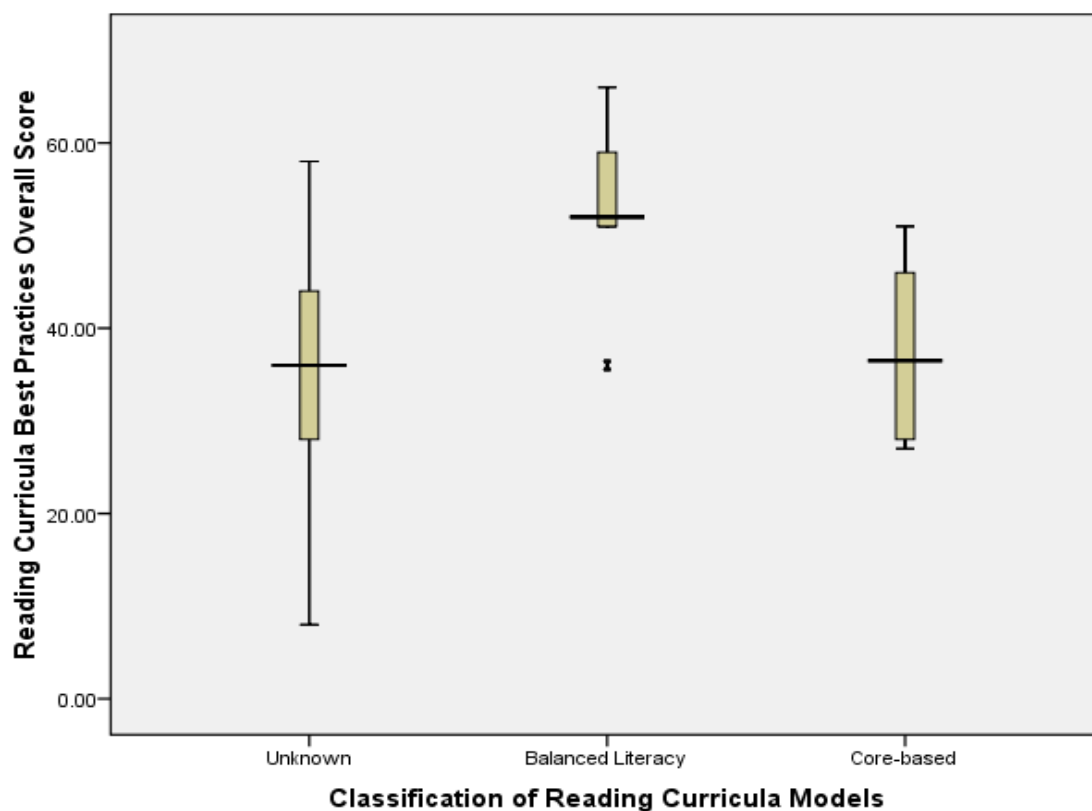


Figure 4.4. Best practice scores according to reading curricula models

The data from best practice scores for the unknown curricula models display a wide variation of scores. The core-based models display scores clustered more evenly around the median scores. The balanced literacy scores display the highest median and maximum scores.

The variation between the different models is shown in Table 4.19 and indicates the range of scores for unknown is 8 to 58 points. The range of best practice scores for balanced literacy is 36 to 66 points with core-based model showing scores of 27 to 51 points.

Table 4.19

Best Practice Scores According to Reading Curricula Models (N = 40)

Curricula Model	<i>n</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unknown	21	8	58	33.2	12.9
Balanced Literacy	13	36	66	51.8	10.0
Core-based	6	27	51	37.5	9.6

Examining the second part of Research Question Three, it is necessary to look each of the nine best practice elements for literacy coaching in Table 4.20. The scores for best practices in literacy coaching ranged from a mean score of 5.18 ($SD = .75$) for Element Six, “Coaches receive district-wide support,” to 14.36 ($SD = 1.2$) for Element Nine “Coaches gather evidence of effectiveness and reflect.” Compared to the earlier best practices scores for reading curricula models, overall the literacy coaching models reflected higher mean scores with less variation. This is perhaps because coaching, regardless of the particular model, reflects many of professional development’s best practice values.

Table 4.20

Best Practice Scores for District's Literacy Coaching (N = 11)

Best Practices	<i>n</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
#1: Understands role of student assessment	11	5	7	5.81	.87
#2: Plans for how to implement literacy plan and/or core program	11	8	9	8.36	.50
#3: Coach qualifications include knowledge about literacy development, experience with adult learners and professional development	11	4	6	5.54	.69
#4: Job-embedded, on-site PD for teachers and coaches	11	12	13	12.54	.52
#5: Coaches meet together to support/strengthen the program	11	6	6	6	0
#6: Coaches receive district-wide support	11	4	6	5.18	.75
#7: Coaching issues from instructional context and communication of coach and teacher	11	11	14	12.72	1.1
#8: Communication and feedback between coach and teacher	11	11	14	12.72	1.0
#9: Coaches gather evidence of effectiveness and reflect using self-assessment rubrics, teacher feedback, coaching logs	11	12	16	14.36	1.20

In order to assign a score indicating the combined presence of best practices, an overall score was computed by adding the values of the nine coaching elements. Figure

4.5 illustrates how coaching models compare according to an overall best practice score. The responsive model had a mean score of 82 ($SD = 3.62$). The responsive model displayed more variation from the mean than the unknown model. The mean score for unknown was 88 ($SD = 2.30$).

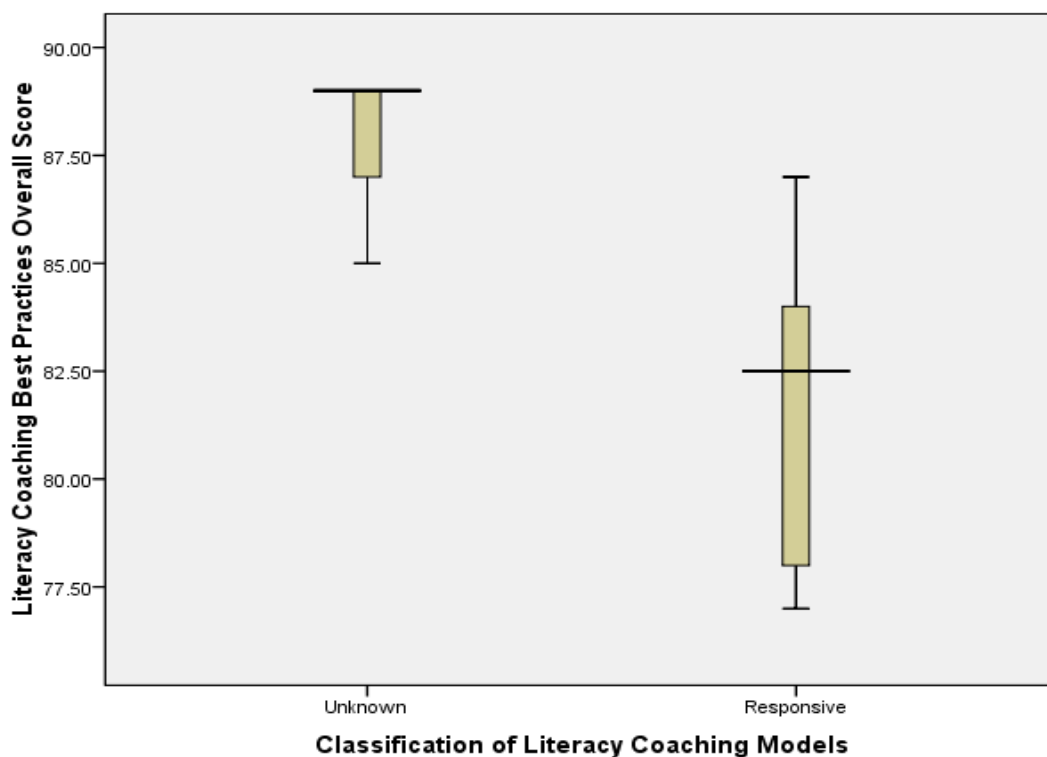


Figure 4.5. Comparison of best practice scores for literacy coaching models

Interestingly, the highest best practice scores were found in two districts classified as unknown with scores of 89. The overall literacy coaching best practice scores, ranging from 77 to 89, did not produce a wide variation of values.

Question Four: Association Between Models

This section of Chapter Four examines whether there is a pattern of association between the type of reading curricula and literacy coach model that a district selects and

implements. Table 4.21 displays the three reading curricula classifications and three literacy coaching classifications and the combinations found within the responding districts.

The responsive literacy coach model was more frequently associated with balanced or unknown reading curricula than the core-based model. There was no clear pattern for literacy coaching models because the sample size was so small.

Table 4.21

Association of Districts' Reading and Coaching Classification (N = 11)

Classification of Literacy Coaching	Classification of Reading Curricula		
	Unknown	Balanced Literacy	Core-based
Unknown	2	1	0
Responsive	3	4	1

Question Five: Association Between Models and Student Achievement

This section examines what associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and third, fourth, and fifth grade reading achievement trends over time. This section begins by examining the associations between the dependent variable, the districts' achievement scores for third through fifth grade levels, and one of the study's independent variables, district reading curricula classification. The comparison is made across a four year period as defined by a baseline or pre-implementation year and Year One through Year Three of curricula implementation. The

achievement data for each district, as noted in Chapter Three, are transformed into deviations between districts' and the state's proficiency rates each year.

The final section of Research Question Five examines the deviation achievement data associated with the study's other independent variable, literacy coaching models. The study examines individual district patterns rather than averages due to the small sample size. The comparison is made across a four year period as defined by a baseline or pre-implementation year and Year One through Year Three of coaching implementation. The achievement data for each district, as noted above, are transformed into deviations between districts' and state's proficiency rates each year.

Before examining the association between reading curricula and achievement trend, it is important to note that the number of participating districts decreased by four in this portion of the data analysis. These four districts were removed due to incompatible archival data. All four districts identified 2001 as their Year One for curricula implementation making their baseline year 2000. The achievement data are not separated into distinct subject areas before 2001. The final alteration to note involves the decision to impute the mean in several cases in order to answer more fully aspects of Research Question Five. The reasons are more thoroughly covered in Chapter Three, however, simply put, the size of the responding sample necessitated this decisions.

Reading curricula models and achievement trends. This study found that districts' curricula classification appears to be associated with specific achievement trends. Figure 4.6 illustrates that over time the districts using a balanced literacy reading curricula model are associated with deviation percentage points in third grade above the state average and above the other reading curricula models, particularly in the third year of

implementation. Comparing the baseline data for third grade, districts preparing to implement balanced literacy had higher, positive mean deviation percentage points compared to districts classified as core-based or unknown. After Year One of curricula implementation, districts with a core-based approach demonstrated an increased average deviation percentage points of .07, surpassing balanced literacy districts' -.40. From Year Two forward, the balanced literacy districts' deviation percentage points increased and surpassed the core-based districts ending at 3.5. The districts classified as using an unknown curricular approach exhibited deviations below the other two models and the state average.

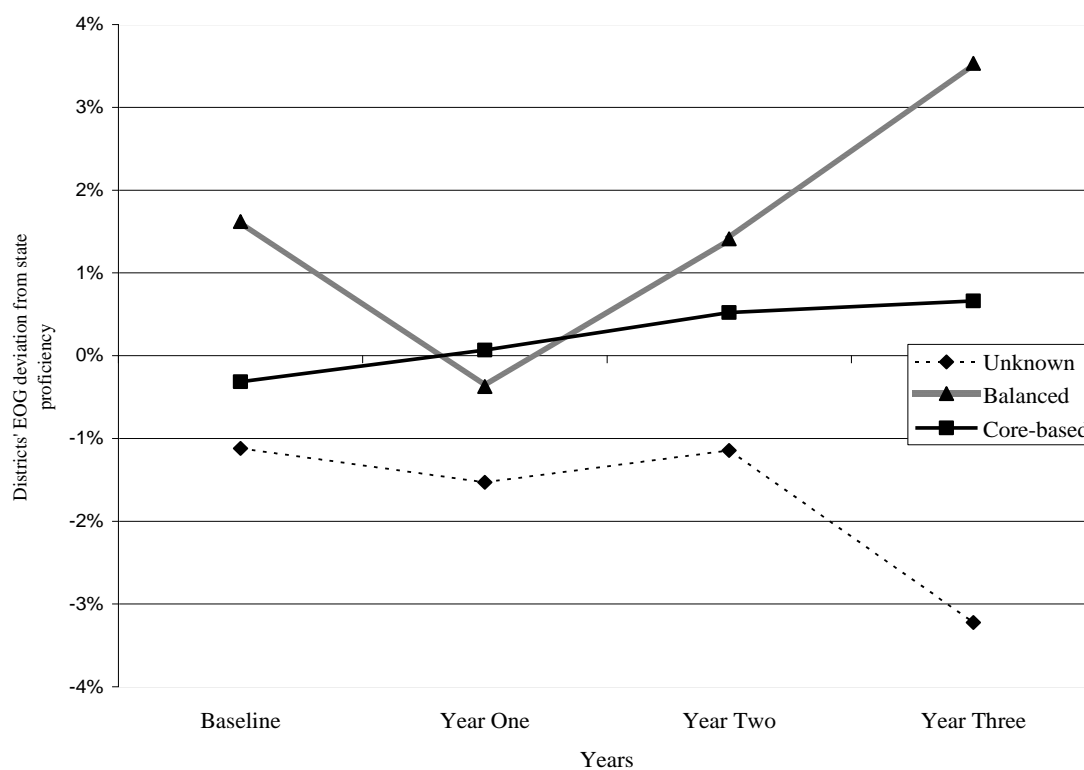


Figure 4.6. Mean 3rd grade EOG deviations based on reading curricula classification

The findings, shown in Table 4.22, indicate that by Year Three districts classified as using a balanced literacy approach scored 3.5 points above the state average proficiency rate. The balanced literacy districts demonstrated some variation ($M = 1.5$, $SD = 1.6$) as did districts classified as unknown districts ($M = -1.8$, $SD = .1$) and core-based districts ($M = .2$, $SD = 0.4$).

Table 4.22

Mean 3rd Grade EOG Deviations Based on Reading Curricula Classification (N=36)

Curricula	<i>n</i>	Baseline	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unknown	21	-1.1	-1.5	-1.2	-3.2	-1.8	-1.3	0.1
Balanced	13	1.6	-0.4	1.4	3.5	1.5	1.5	1.6
Core-based	6	-0.3	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.4

In order to explore if this association held true across grade levels, the study examined both fourth and fifth grades as well. The fourth grade deviation for all reading curricula models (see Figure 4.7).

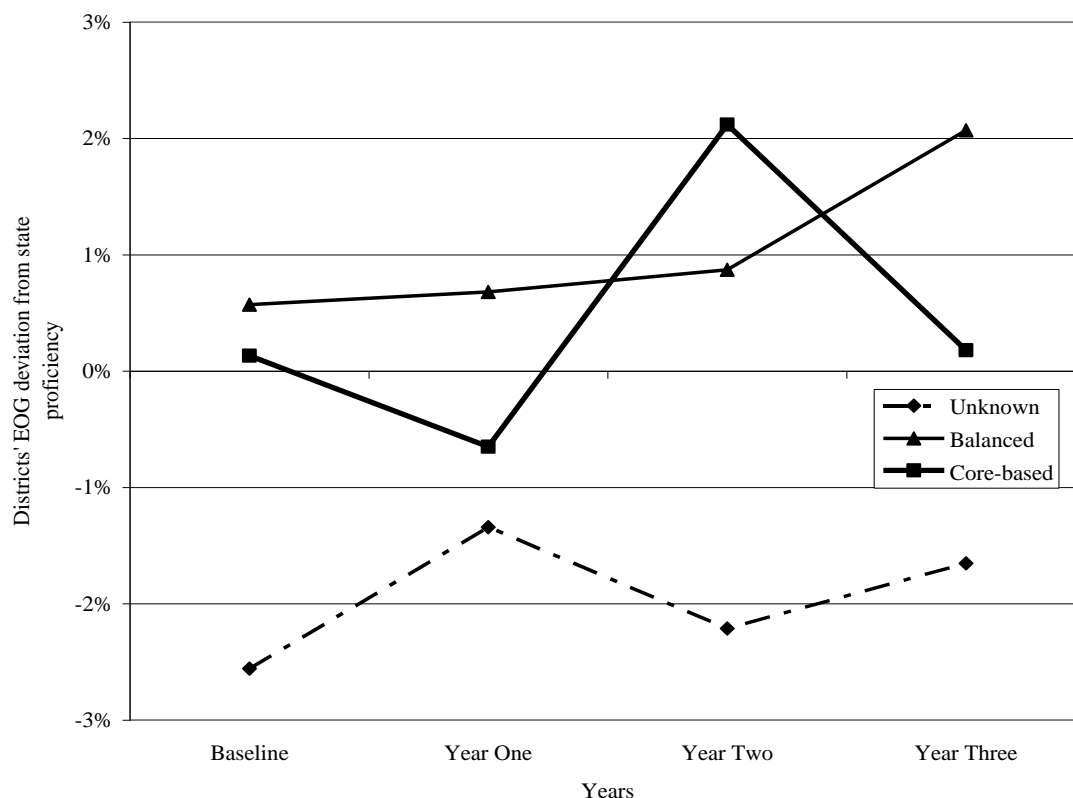


Figure 4.7. Mean 4th Grade EOG deviations based on reading curricula classification

Comparison of the baseline data for fourth grade indicates that districts classified as using a balanced literacy approach had mean deviation percentage points that were .57, slightly higher than core-based districts' .13, and higher than unknown districts' -2.56. After Year One of curricula implementation, districts with core-based approach experienced a decrease in their percentage points, but by Year Two these districts surpassed the balanced literacy districts. By Year Three, the balanced literacy districts' deviation percentage points increased positively and remained higher than the core-based districts. Both of these types of reading curricula models ended with positive deviation percentage points above the state average. However, the districts classified as using an

unknown curricular approach deviated below the other two models and remained negative for all four years below the state average proficiency rate.

The variability of these findings is shown in Table 4.23. These data suggest that by Year Three, districts with a balanced literacy approach had deviation percentage points larger than the other districts. The data show that the balanced literacy districts had positive deviations ($M = 1.0$, $SD = .69$) while the unknown district deviations were negative ($M = -1.9$, $SD = .54$).

Table 4.23

Mean 4th Grade EOG Deviations Based on Reading Curricula Classification (N=36)

Curricula	<i>n</i>	Baseline Year	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unknown	21	-2.56	-1.34	-2.21	-1.65	-1.9	-1.9	0.54
Balanced	13	0.57	0.68	0.87	2.07	1.0	0.9	0.69
Core-based	6	0.13	-0.65	2.12	0.18	0.4	0.2	1.17

Comparison of the baseline data for fifth grade in Figure 4.8 indicates districts classified as using a balanced literacy approach experienced the highest deviation of nearly three percentage points above the state average while the districts classified as unknown scored consistently one point below the state average, decreasing to more than five deviation percentage points by Year Three. Districts classified as using unknown reading curricula models had deviations that were at or below the state average consistently across the time period.

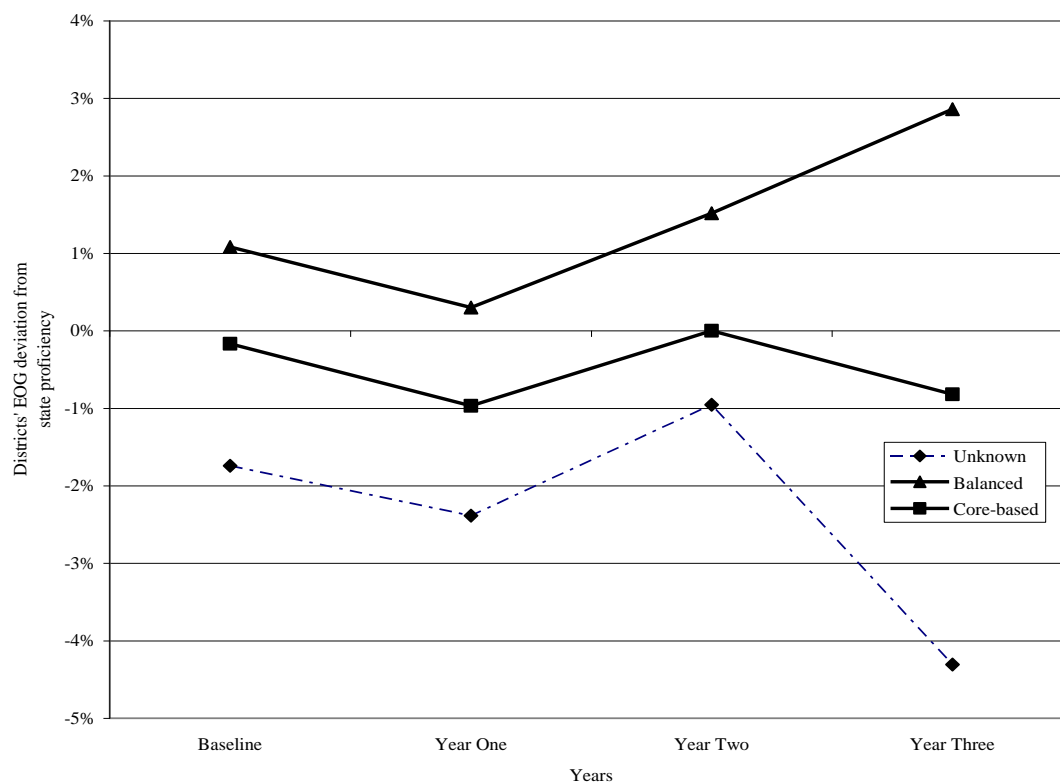


Figure 4.8. Mean 5th grade EOG deviations based on reading curricula classification

The variability of these findings is shown in Table 4.24. These data suggest that the balanced literacy approach showed the largest positive deviation. The balanced literacy and core-based districts' varied slightly ($M = 1.4$, $SD = 1.07$; $M = -0.5$, $SD = 1.07$), respectively while the unknown districts demonstrated greater variability ($M = -2.3$, $SD = 1.43$).

Table 4.24

Mean 5th Grade EOG Deviation Based on Reading Curricula Classification (N=36)

Curricula	<i>n</i>	Baseline Year	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unknown	21	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	-0.04	-2.3	0.01
Balanced	13	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.03	1.4	0.01
Core-based	6	0.00	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	-0.5	0.00

Literacy coaching models and achievement trends. The final section of Research Question Five concerns the possible association of particular literacy coaching models and student achievement deviation percentage points. Due to the small sample size, the district data are presented individually. One district was excluded, due to incomplete archival EOG data. Figure 4.9 indicates that the literacy coaching models did not appear to be associated with one particular student achievement trend.

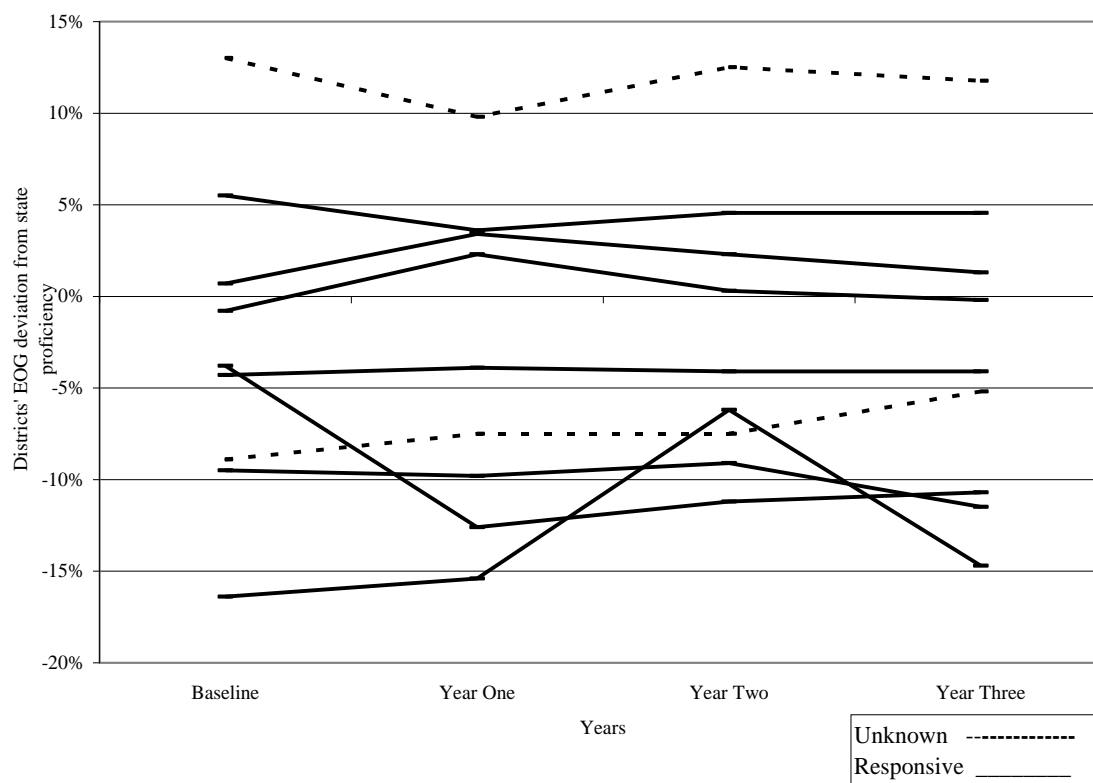


Figure 4.9. 3rd grade EOG deviations based on literacy coach models

It appears that the literacy coaching districts were divided equally with achievement deviations above and below the state average proficiencies. Two of the three districts classified as unknown did show achievement trends 5-10 percentage points above the state proficiency rate. Regardless of positive or negative placement, the lines are relatively flat indicating more steady performance, not dramatic increases or decreases. The limitation of the sample size perhaps affected this analysis and is discussed further in the Chapter Five.

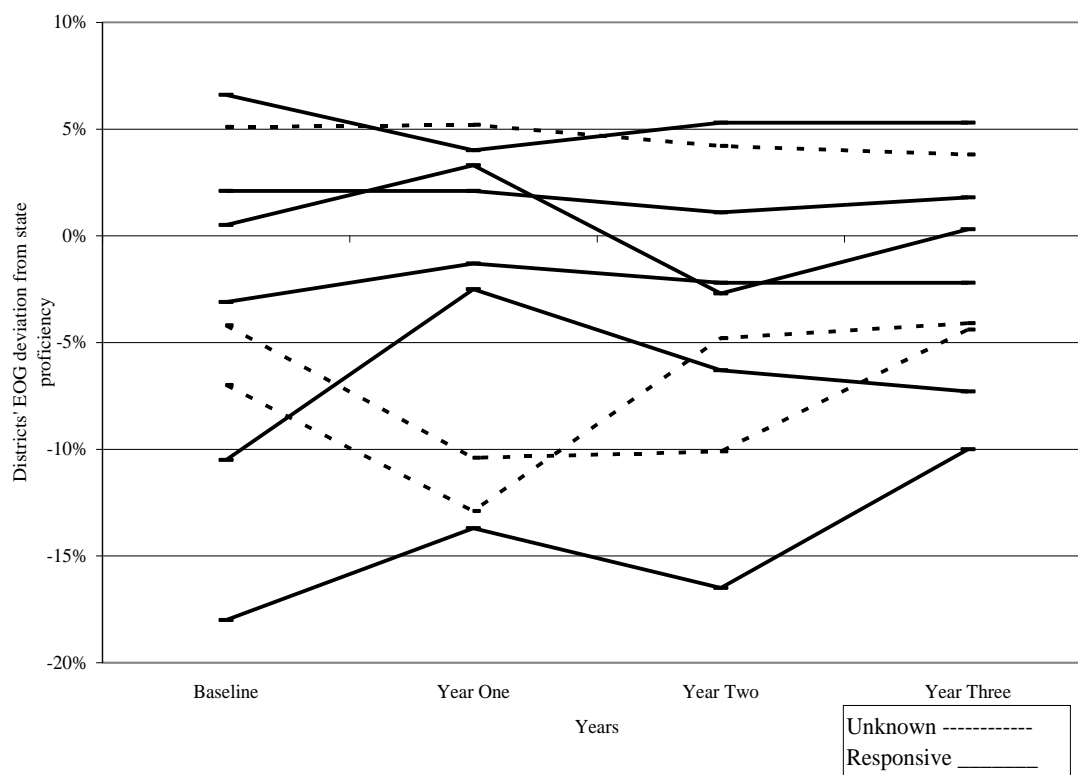


Figure 4.10. 4th Grade EOG deviations based on literacy coach models

The fourth grade deviation percentages (Figure 4.10) do not indicate a clear association between the implementation of either literacy coach model. However, it is interesting to note that almost all the districts either remained relatively unchanged or by Year Three of implementation had more positive deviations than the before the program, represented by the Baseline. Finally, examining the achievement trends for 5th grade (see Figure 4.11) the study did not find a clear association according to a district's coaching model. The deviations remain mostly flat and unchanged.

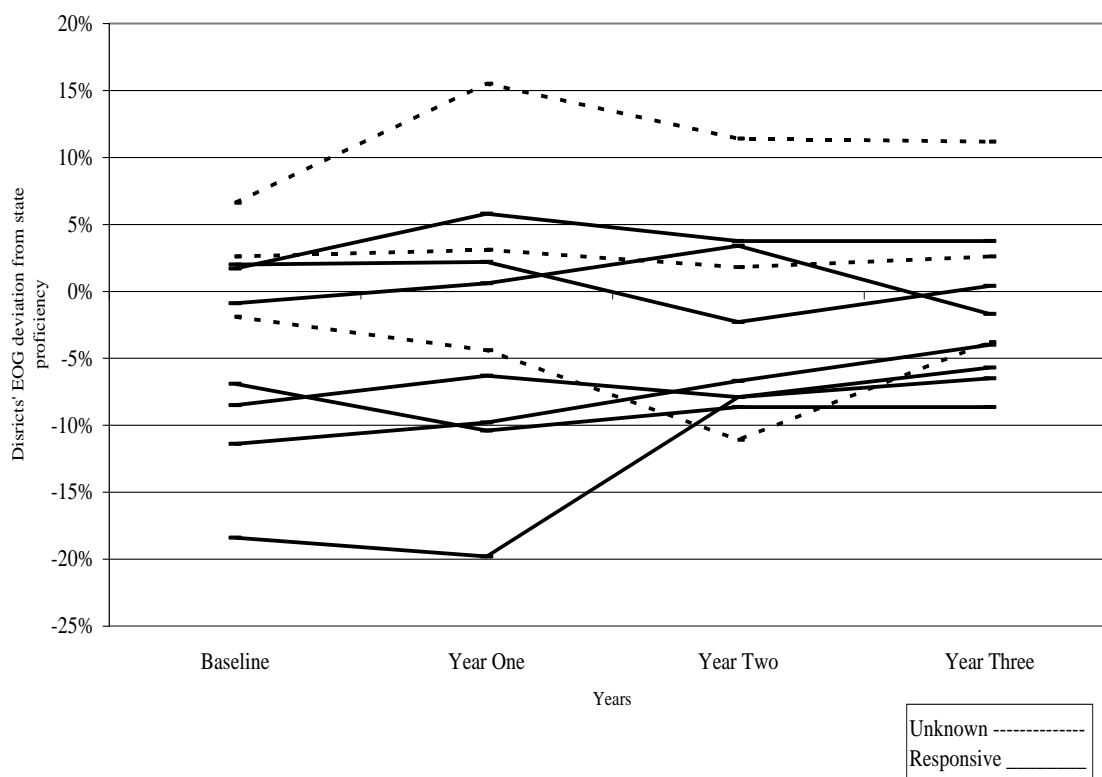


Figure 4.11. 5th grade EOG deviations based on literacy coach models

Question Six: Associations Between Models and ED Students' Reading Achievement

This section will examine what associations, if any, exist between reading curricula models and the reading achievement of ED students and as well between literacy coach models and the reading achievement of ED students. It is important to remember that the ED achievement data are a composite made from third through eighth grade End of Grade reading test data. The potential impact that this composite number may have on the study's results is discussed further in the limitations section in Chapter Five.

This study found that a district's reading curricula classification appears to be associated with specific achievement trends for ED students. As shown in Figure 4.12, the achievement trends of the three reading curricula models appear distinctly different. In its baseline year the unknown reading curricula model shows an average deviation percentage points of 1.0 above the state's average. By Year Two, the average deviation percentage points dips to -2.0 below the state and in Year Three returns to 1.0 above the state. The balanced literacy and core-based models both start at 3.0 above the state average in their baseline year. In Year One, the core-based model increases to 4.0. By Year Two it increases to 5.0 and then decreases back to 4.0 in Year Three. Meanwhile the balanced literacy remains initially unchanged in Year One and then steadily increases to 7.0 by Year Three. After three years of implementation, districts using a balanced literacy reading curricula model are associated with higher deviation percentage points for the subgroup of ED students but they also started out higher, it must be noted.

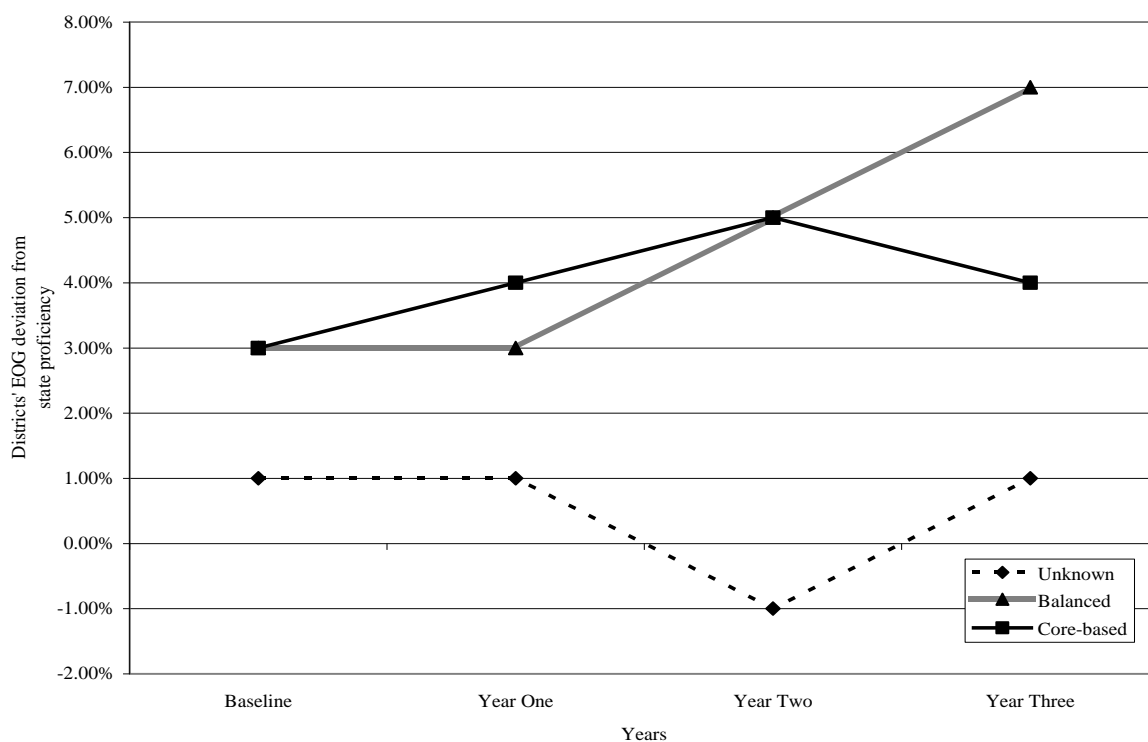


Figure 4.12. Mean 3rd-8th grade EOG deviations for ED students according to reading curricula model

Examining the data's variability (see Table 4.25), the districts with a balanced literacy approach displayed a slightly larger mean and also experienced wider variation ($M = .05$, $SD = .02$) findings than either the unknown or core-based districts respectively ($M = .01$, $SD = .01$; $M = .04$, $SD = .01$).

Table 4.25

Mean 3rd-8th grade EOG Deviations for ED Students According to Curricula Classification (N = 36)

Curricula Classification	<i>n</i>	Baseline	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Unknown	21	.01	.01	-.01	.01	.01	.01
Balanced	13	.03	.03	.05	.07	.05	.02
Core-based	6	.03	.04	.05	.04	.04	.01

Figure 4.13 examines possible associations of literacy coaching models on student achievement for ED students. Some districts do indicate some movement either towards the state average or above, but there is no clear pattern or association to be noted. While one district classified as responsive starts in at 11% below the state proficiency, over the three years of implementation the proficiency deviation decreases to only 5%. Perhaps the relatively small number of responses prevents the formation of an overall statement of association.

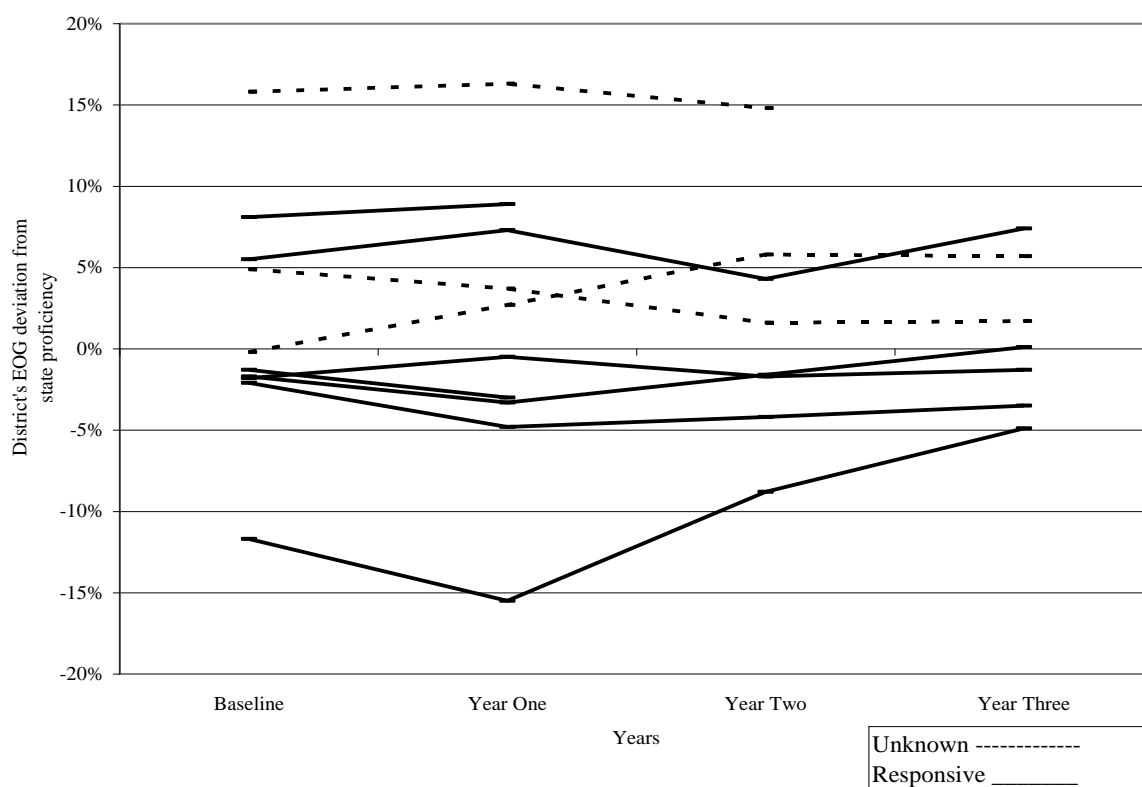


Figure 4.13. 3rd-8th grade EOG district deviations for ED students according to literacy coaching model

Summary of Findings

This study discovered some interesting findings. Concerning Research Question One, more than half of the respondents indicated that their districts' current reading curricula represented a change from the past. Almost all the districts responding had participated in district-wide reform concerning reading curricula. Nearly all the respondents selected “scientifically-based reading instruction” and “balanced literacy” as the top two curricula approaches best describing their districts' reading curricula. A third

of districts met the criteria for being classified as “balanced literacy” and 15% were “core-based,” while more than half of the responding districts’ reading curriculum model resisted classification and was consequently marked as “unknown.”

For Research Question Two, more than half of the respondents indicated that the reason for establishing the coaching program was connected to a reading curriculum initiative. More than one third indicated that their coaching program was tied to Reading First monies. All the respondents indicated that their coaches have opportunities to attend coach-specific professional development sessions. The data suggest that there are frequent coaching interactions between coaches and teachers during either grade level meetings or ad-hoc informal conversations, and that these most often include examining student data or modeling instructional methods. More than 70% of the responding districts met the criteria for their coaching model being classified as responsive, while the remaining districts resisted classification and were marked as unknown.

For Research Question Three, the reading curricula and literacy coaching model scores for best practices were varied, particularly for the reading models. The balanced literacy reading curricula model had the highest mean score, while several districts classified as having an unknown type of reading curricula had either very low or, in one case, the highest best practice scores. Overall the best practice scores were high for all of the districts with literacy coaching in place.

For Research Question Four, the possible associations between districts’ reading curricula and coaching model indicated that there was only one core-based district indicated using any form of literacy coaching. The balanced literacy districts were more often associated with implementing a responsive coaching model.

For Research Question Five, a district's curriculum classification appears to be associated with achievement trends. In districts classified as using balanced literacy curricula, achievement shows positive deviation percentage points above both the state average and the other curricula models. The achievement trends associated with particular literacy coaching models varied; some deviations were well above the state average, while others dipped more than 15 points below the state average. Perhaps more importantly, the deviations remained relatively flat with little dramatic increase or decrease. Interestingly, two districts that were classified as unknown for both reading curricula and coaching models demonstrated strong achievement trends; one of these districts' deviation was more than 14 percentage points above the state average.

For Research Question Six, reading curricula classified as either balanced literacy or core-based were associated with slightly higher achievement trends for ED students across the three years of implementation.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Overview

Chapter Five presents a summary of the study and conclusions from examining the data. This study's purpose was to identify the types of upper elementary reading curricula and literacy coach models being used in North Carolina school districts and to examine the models in relationship to best practices and their association with students' reading achievement. Responses to the six research questions provide new knowledge with regard to the types of reading curricula and literacy coaching models being implemented in North Carolina's elementary schools. The findings also shed light on how particular reading curricula models may be associated with reading achievement trends for students in the upper elementary and, specifically, for Economically Disadvantaged (ED) student achievement.

The research questions that guided this study follow:

1. What are the different reading curricula models being used in North Carolina's districts in third, fourth, and fifth grades?
2. What are the different literacy coaching models being implemented in North Carolina's school districts in third, fourth, and fifth grades?
3. To what extent do these models reflect best practices according to guidelines established by the International Reading Association, the National Reading Panel, and the Literacy Coach Clearinghouse?
4. Are there patterns in the type of reading curricula models and literacy coaching models that districts implement?

5. What associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and third, fourth, and fifth grade reading achievement trends in North Carolina over a four-year period?
6. What associations exist, if any, between reading curricula models, literacy coaching models, and achievement trends for the subgroup of Economically Disadvantaged students over a four-year period?

Research Question One

The findings indicate that reading curricula are dynamic elements in North Carolina school districts. The majority of districts indicated using scientifically-based reading instruction and balanced literacy approaches which align with the idea that effective instruction is built on the strengths of several approaches (Cowen, 2003; Strickland, 1998). While North Carolina's Standard Course of Study Objectives' parameters are firm, the methods and content delivered in districts are more fluid and open to influences and interpretations. Districts are updating and changing their reading curricula and participating in district-wide reading curricula initiatives. Districts may align their curricula with the recent Reading First initiative, National Reading Panel recommendations, Proficient Reader Research (Pearson, Dole, Duffy, & Roehler, 1992), or a combination of other approaches. The study found that the types of materials and pedagogy being implemented in North Carolina's 115 districts differ widely.

An overall classification of the districts using the researcher-created Reading Curricula Classification System found that approximately one-third were classified as balanced literacy. Fewer districts were core-based. More than half of the respondents could not be classified either way and had to be considered unknown. The large number

of districts classified as unknown was perplexing. The possible reasons for having such a large group of districts that resisted classification are worth consideration. A district might in fact articulate an eclectic approach, one that purposefully combines attributes from various sources to match its particular instructional design and needs. On the other hand, a district might defy classification because its approach is merely aimless. A district may passively float along with the curricula current or it may be more site-based as the revolving door of new central office leadership brings new interpretations and agendas. The unknown classification aside, this study suggests that across North Carolina districts students are encountering at least two very different curricular approaches: balanced and core-based.

Overall, “balanced literacy” was the most frequent response when districts were asked about the types of curricula being selected and implemented. A similar high percentage of responses indicated that curricula must also demonstrate “alignment with explicit comprehension strategies” and “integration of word study and phonics instruction.” This finding lends credibility as these two curricular aspects are fundamental elements of a balanced literacy approach.

However, the incongruence between the different responses is worth exploring. While many districts indicated using the balanced literacy approach, only a small number of districts sought textbook waivers in order to purchase trade books or guided reading book sets. The majority of districts used monies for text books. What does this discrepancy suggest? Perhaps curriculum directors used the widely accepted best practice terminology to express intentions for the district curricula choices, wanting to side with balanced literacy, but in reality the districts may not have the resources

(knowledge, leadership, and/or personnel) to align the districts' actual content and methods with this educational approach. Regardless, the support and manner in which districts expect teachers to use these core-based materials are important (Dewitz et al., 2010). This study found that many districts emphasized instructional components that both develop students' phonics and comprehension skills. This finding indicates that proficient reader research is being integrated into common district practices or expectations. It is important to note that these instructional components are not entirely based on one particular genre of curricula materials. How students respond to the core-based curricula versus balanced literacy curricula is still being debated (Coles, 2002; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003).

The 13 districts classified as using a balanced literacy approach also indicated they drew upon a variety of professional development resources such as Teachers College, educational consultants, and literacy coaches. Several of these outside entities tend to offer professional development support that is aligned with a balanced literacy approach which adds strength to this finding. The decisions that districts make for curricula support and professional development are sometimes interrelated and this reality supports the research showing that professional development and curricular reform can be mutually supportive or related (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Piasta et al., 2009).

Research Question Two

Coach-based professional development is developing a research base that indicates its benefits, including the idea that explicit time spent with a coach can impact teacher development and eventually student achievement (Garet et al., 2008; Marsh et al., 2008). This study found that 20 districts indicated having a literacy coaching program.

Of that number, 11 districts completed the Literacy Coaching Survey. All included literacy coaching in their strategic plans, listing “low student achievement” and support of “reading curricula initiatives” as reasons for the coaching approach. The coaches’ time was found to be spent modeling instructional methods or working with teachers to analyze student data. The findings suggest that the upper elementary coaches emphasized the “comprehension” instructional aspect of reading more than the “phonemic awareness” or “phonics/word skills” of the reading process. This finding reflects and matches the current research-based understanding of students’ reading instructional needs in the upper elementary years (Pinnell & Fountas, 2006; Reutzel & Cooter, 1999).

The study classified the majority of the responding districts as responsive while the remaining districts were considered unknown and none of the responding systems were classified as using a directive approach. Perhaps this means that literacy coaching models in North Carolina are in fact following best practices and using a more responsive approach. These findings were supported by the data indicating that literacy coaches most often engaged with individual teachers in informal professional development sessions that fell into three main categories of interactions: “pre-observation,” “analyze student data,” and “collaborative planning.” These interactions are essential to coaching models that emphasize the role of problem solving and placing teachers’ needs first, rather than implementing a district’s curricula plan (Dozier, 2006; Fisher, 2007; Garet et al., 2008).

Finally, the study found that these coaching models sought support from professional development resources such as Cognitive Coaching, Literacy Collaborative, Reading First, and NCREADS which are most often aligned with a “responsive” coaching approach which supports these districts’ classification.

Research Question Three

Data for Question Three suggest that the curricula and coaching programs represented in the survey responses demonstrated a range of best practice scores defined by guidelines established by the International Reading Association, the National Reading Panel, and the Literacy Coach Clearinghouse. Sixty-six was the maximum possible score and this study found that less than fourth of the participating districts reached scores beyond fifty-five. The high scoring districts were classified as using balanced literacy curricula approach. The lowest scores on the best practice scale went to those districts using a core-based reading approach.

There were two high scores captured by two districts using an unknown approach, which again raises the question of why their curricular approaches eluded this researcher's classification of models. One of those districts indicated having a change in reading curricula in the last two years. The majority of its responses indicated that it relied on textbooks and teacher directed instruction but it challenged the classification system in so far as some responses placed emphasis as well on assessment and progress monitoring to support differentiation as required by Response to Intervention (RTI). These contradictory elements are perhaps growing and can help explain why the study found the majority of districts were classified as unknown in terms of reading curricula. Perhaps these districts are in transition as they respond to the state's mandates for more assessment monitoring and adherence to the spirit of RTI. With growing commitment to differentiating, districts might be widening their selection and use of curricula materials.

Regarding the evidence of best practices in literacy coaching, a district's literacy coaching model could potentially score ninety-one points. There was a slight variation in

the best practices for the participating districts but all scored near the maximum possible. It is encouraging to see that the current literacy coaching programs represented in this study reflected a high degree of best practices. With increased attention on the needs of teachers, more schools are turning to coach-based models that, by their very nature, reflect a best practices approach to professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Toll, 2004). It must also be noted that coaching has become accepted as an effective form of professional development (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Walpole, 2002). The fact that coaching models, regardless of the specific classification, had high best practice scores is not surprising.

Research Question Four

Data for Question Four indicate that of the eleven districts with coaching programs that completed the Literacy Coaching Survey, only one was classified as having a core-based reading program. The remaining ten districts responding to the coaching survey were matched with a balanced literacy or unknown reading curricular approach. The interaction of curricula and professional development models has been part of the earliest coaching studies that were interested in determining how coaches might help teachers transfer new knowledge (Joyce & Showers, 1982). This study's focus on both curricula and professional development supports the idea that the elements of coaching and curricula have natural consequences for one another.

Research Question Five

Researchers call for empirical research to determine, measure, and link the impact of coaching on teacher instructional practices and student achievement (Shanklin, 2009; Walpole & McKenna, 2008). While no empirical evidence was produced due to this

study's low statistical power, the findings suggest that the balanced literacy curricula models were associated with slightly increased deviations of proficiency rates for student achievement. This finding about the relevance of districts' reading curricula is important and adds to the growing research that suggests that curricula content and quality count (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2008; Gamse et al., 2008; Wilson, Martens, & Poonam, 2005).

The association between literacy coaching models and student achievement was less clear, in part due to the sample size. However, the study did note that several of the districts with unknown literacy coaching and unknown reading curricula were associated with higher deviation proficiency rates across time than districts without coaching in place. While this study did not investigate whether the results were statistically significant, it does add more weight to the balance that coaching and student achievement is interrelated (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2007; Walpole & McKenna, 2008).

Research Question Six

While some suggest that students at risk for reading failure benefit from explicit, systematic phonics instruction (Adams & Bruck, 1995; Ehri & Robbins, 1992), others suggest that reading achievement issues may stem from issues of poverty and a "drill and kill" mentality that causes student disengagement (Reyhner, 2008). This study found that ED students' reading achievement was higher in districts that implement balanced literacy curricula. This slight increase in ED students' reading achievement from balanced literacy districts is important suggesting that the form and function of curricula matters. One central tenet of balanced literacy, as opposed to core-based, is that students need time and access to reading materials so they can become self-selecting readers; this

practice generates more student growth than sticking to a teacher-selected reading diet (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Linday, 2010). With the nation's goal for all students to reach proficiency by 2014, the methods and materials must not be an afterthought. The decisions by districts are critical and should be considered as a factor that may encourage or discourage fragile learners.

Strengths, Limitations, and Delimitations

The strength of this study was the multifaceted nature of the inquiry. While the decision to examine six research questions at times was perplexing, it also allowed for natural connections to be made between the analysis of reading curricula and professional development. The nexus of their associations with best practices and student achievement was also critical.

Another strength of this study was the decision to examine the best practice elements of each responding district's curricula and coaching model. This process allowed for evaluation of each district's curricula or coach model prior to applying the classification matrices which classified each district's curricula and/or coaching model into one of three distinct categories.

A final strength of this study is my familiarity with the nuances of curricula and professional development. I had experienced key aspects of the study as a classroom teacher, staying awake worried about a struggling reader, and as a literacy coach. At times I may have explored veins of the research more from my own curiosity than from a systematic approach; however, the commitment to use my knowledge and inquiry to build authentic connections between research questions has created a rich study.

On the other hand, one potential limitation of the study is my acknowledged personal connection to these topics which may have biased decisions made in aligning survey responses to specific curricula or coaching models. Every effort was used to rely on the expert panel's guidance and the pilot members' responses, but my direct experiences perhaps colored the categories for curricula or coaching. This may have lead to another limitation of the study. The formation of the classification matrix used to determine a curricular or a coaching approach was too restrictive and perhaps led to an overabundance of unknown districts. It is also possible that some districts may fit a particular classification but they are not implementing best practices and so it is difficult to determine exactly what their true approach in fact represents.

The main limitations of this study are primarily due to the response rate. Response rates are one of the main concerns when undertaking a study based on a survey instrument. Several steps were followed in order to insure adequate participation. The 115 e-mail addresses were confirmed with a personal phone call to each district level office. An initial notification letter and lottery ticket were personalized and mailed to each curriculum director. Subsequently three rounds of personalized e-mail reminders were sent along with an extension of the survey window.

The response rate for the literacy coaching survey, in particular, needed to be larger. Although half of the original Reading Curricula respondents indicated having a literacy coaching program in their district, a little more than half of those respondents chose to complete the Literacy Coaching Survey. In other words, only eleven districts chose to enter and complete the Literacy Coaching Survey which made it difficult to determine clear associations between particular types of reading curricula and literacy

coach models. Again, a follow-up personal phone contact to each respondent who indicated that the district had a coaching program might have encouraged completion of the Literacy Coaching Survey. The reliance on an electronic survey to gather sensitive data may have deterred some respondents. Though more and more employees are becoming technologically savvy, perhaps a paper-based survey might have been more easily administered and collected. However, it must be noted that there was minimal evidence of computer glitches. Another possible reason for the low response rate may be that coaching initiatives are not as pervasive a feature as assumed. With the end of Reading First federal monies, it is possible that districts did not have funds for literacy coaching during the 2010-11 school year.

Another limitation of this study is the length of the surveys. While every effort was made to streamline response items and to keep them aligned to the basic information required to answer the six research questions, the surveys, particularly the Literacy Coach survey were perhaps too long. Rather than adhering to one type of question or response design, such as drop down boxes, the surveys included numerous types. In addition, several questions were too complex. Requiring respondents to undertake two steps within one question, for example grouping and then ranking items, perhaps led to confusion. By not restricting the survey responses and by allowing respondents to “select all that apply,” particular questions perhaps diffused the precision of the instrument. The pilot process did not hint at this trouble, but I imagine that one reason the literacy coach survey was not completed was that the eligible respondents were fatigued by the initial reading curricula survey. Abbreviating the surveys or staggering the arrival of the notifying email

and link might have made a difference. The sheer lack of numbers restricted the types of statistical analysis that were possible.

This study did not seek to gather data at a school or classroom level, but rather from the district level. Self-reporting errors could cloud the results. For example, a curriculum director might be unaware of the district's approach and/or might try to elaborate or upgrade a district's reality to match a perceived best practice. While a curriculum director may serve as a district's official voice regarding curricula or coaching models, individual school principals and teachers are ultimately the ones who choose to implement or not implement a district's professed approach. My first-hand experience as a literacy consultant and teacher education supervisor in particular schools or classrooms presented evidence of a disconnect between a district's stated program and the content and methods implemented by teachers. While aware of potential incongruities, nevertheless, this researcher determined that there is value in data indicating what content and methods of teaching reading North Carolina school districts purport to use in elementary classrooms. Intention or lack of intention to implement best practice is valuable information.

While teachers are the facilitators of curricula and consumers of professional development, this study focused on district-level decisions. This study does not take into consideration the variation that exists within curricula implementation or coaching styles. Obviously, teachers can nod in agreement at district meetings about required curricula and then close their doors and enact their own curricula. Likewise, a coach can be told to monitor teachers' implementation of particular curriculum elements, but the coach might choose to follow the needs of the teacher or vice versa.

Finally, the responding districts, admittedly, may not be representative of the general population. It is quite possible that the respondents were outliers offering the “best case scenario.” The responding curriculum directors may be more conscientious and work in districts eager to publicize their particular reading curricula approach. The non-responding districts may in fact represent a more status quo approach to reading curricula; districts select one approach and stick to it, despite what current best practices or federal initiatives advise.

There are several delimitations with the decision to examine reading curricula and literacy coach model with regard to possible trends in student achievement. This study did not account for students moving in or out of school districts, and therefore the data are open to influences of migrating students. Because of the limited responses, this study did not take into account the role of teacher quality as measured by percentage of advanced degrees that can impact student success and achievement. It also did not examine the impact that local tax revenue may play for per pupil expenditure. The issue of variability of the quality of coaching suggests another possible delimitation. One district might have a coaching model built with experienced coaches, while another might have the same model but consist of novice coaches who may not be as effective and able to support the district’s reading curricula. Therefore, the district’s reading achievement scores might reflect more about the individual coaches than about other programmatic ingredients.

The number of curricula and coaching models that resisted classification was curious. While an unknown classification can be useful as a method to identify districts that are neither balanced literacy nor core-based, further distillation would be helpful. It

is possible that another term, such as eclectic, might better represent this group of districts, as discussed earlier.

Future Research

The research on reading curricula has risen and fallen on different camps' ideas of what is best for children. For the most part, schools have moved beyond the whole language vs. phonics debate. Though some concern was voiced about the National Reading Panel's translation of the five essential reading components—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—it is clear that most in the field see the need for some sort of inclusive approach (International Reading Association, 2003). The proficient reader research has helped to establish, as well, a clear set of guidelines for how to use explicit techniques by modeling what good readers do to help struggling readers (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997).

This study's examination of district-level decisions about reading curricula and professional development is important because it encourages educational leaders to stop and take a moment to survey the landscape. These big dollar and big impact decisions no longer need to be made on a desolate stretch of abandoned road where few travelers will venture. If today's demand for 21st century learners and teachers requires that students and teachers have opportunities to engage in challenging and worthy curricular and professional development ventures, then districts must think about how their curricular decisions are impacting students. Future studies could examine if districts with literacy coaches have higher achievement rates than districts without literacy coach-based professional development models. It might also be worthwhile to employ a qualitative case study approach to uncover intricacies of teacher and student experiences within a

core-based vs. balanced literacy setting. Trying to de-mystify and describe the main elements of the unknown reading curricula approach might be rewarding and lead to a more comprehensive understanding.

In terms of considering the implications that this study may have in the future, I wonder if the practices of curriculum directors will be altered. Perhaps the very act of completing a survey and categorizing a district's curricula and professional development approach might lead a curriculum director to reflect on and realign a district's espoused approach and actual method of implementation.

This study can inform a variety of stakeholders both inside and outside of the educational arena, including the general tax payer and elected officials. For example, during these tight economic times, the North Carolina General Assembly is re-evaluating and, in some cases, removing educational programs from the state's budget. The coaching initiative needs to be better examined in North Carolina in order to inform policy makers' decisions regarding this investment. This is a timely issue as school districts, having spent the last Reading First federal funds with mandated text adoptions, are stepping into future school years uncertain of where or how to invest precious curricula funds. District leaders making a pitch to align curricula with balanced literacy models, may find particular graphs helpful that indicate the possible association of these models with higher proficiency deviations.

Similarly, since North Carolina school budgets currently receive no funds for professional development, perhaps this study's findings can serve as data for future funding endeavors. The current administration through the Secretary of Education has indicated a willingness to fund innovative programs through the Race to the Top federal

grants (US Department of Education, 2010). Districts could use this study's findings on the connection between coaching and curricula approaches to bolster grant applications which incorporate best practices.

Recommendations for Practice

This study is built on the premise that the achievement gap threatens too many students. Almost all of the respondents indicated that their district had participated recently in district-wide reform initiatives impacting reading achievements. State-wide initiatives such as Reading Foundations and RTI provide curricula resources. Will districts' selection and curricula implementation be determined by materials that are aligned with the newest program or with reading best practices? This study's findings may help district leaders by helping them to note that particular reading curricula classifications represent higher/lower best practice levels. This finding may be instructive to districts aspiring to align curricula with best practices.

The development of the theoretical framework guiding this study may contribute to a better understanding of the role that districts play in curricula and professional development articulation. The model itself is built on the idea that a district's particular approach reflects how a district's own unique policies and philosophy impact its choices. The framework offers a model for how best practices, whether weakened or strengthened by the filtering district, may eventually impact student achievement. Perhaps the distance between theory and practice can be bridged slightly if researchers continue to examine these connections and see that district culture, instructional practices and student achievement results are entwined.

Conclusions

The connection between quality curricula and quality professional development continues to be worthy of inquiry. Future research could use this study's data to establish longitudinal studies of districts now identified as implementing balanced literacy or core-based curricula. Using the findings, a study might engage in a case study of districts to determine to what extent a district leader's description or awareness of curricula matches what is really happening in a district's schools.

In 2011 reading achievement continues to lag for many students (Gewertz, 2010). This study was built on the premise that stopping at an overlook to take stock of the upper elementary curricula and coaching landscape in North Carolina's school districts provides a useful perspective. What curricular approaches and products do districts support for their upper elementary school children? Before this study, this question was not addressed. Identifying what curricula are in place for students is important. This study also asked about what coach-based professional development models districts are using to support elementary school teachers. Finally, it included an examination of the relationship between reading curricula models, coaching models, and student achievement.

With calls for equity of opportunity for students and common core objectives, this study adds to the indications that North Carolina's upper elementary school children do not receive the same reading curricula. Similarly, at this point coaching-based professional development models remain an opportunity for only some of the state's elementary teachers. As North Carolina and our nation work to find best practice solutions to address the literacy crisis for our educational, economic, and moral well

being, the question of equal access continues to linger. For the sake of many school children who need every precious opportunity to become readers, and for the sake of the many school teachers who need every precious opportunity to develop their ability to sustain instructional excellence, this study invited district leaders to pull into the overlook, take a moment, see the view, and plan how to steer towards more funds and expertise to select best practice curricula and professional development.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A: Reading Curricula Survey

Reading Curricula Survey

Welcome to the Reading Curricula Survey

This survey asks questions about your district's upper elementary reading curricula in grades 3rd -5th. Reading Curricula is defined as the methods and materials used to teach reading in a classroom. Your honesty and insight is much appreciated.

Thanks for your time!

Participant Demographics

1. How long have you been in your current position as curriculum director?

- ☐ Less than one year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ 6 years
- ☐ 7 years
- ☐ 8 years
- ☐ 9 years
- ☐ 10 years
- ☐ More than ten years

2. How long have you been employed by this district?

- ☐ Less than one year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ 6 years
- ☐ 7 years
- ☐ 8 years
- ☐ 9 years
- ☐ 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

Reading Curricula: Selection

*3. Who is responsible for selecting the district's upper elementary curricula or approach to reading (both materials and methods) for grades 3rd - 5th?

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ school board
- ☐ central office
- ☐ curriculum council
- ☐ individual schools
- ☐ individual classroom teachers
- ☐ outside entity such as educational non-profit or business
- ☐ principal (school instructional leader)
- ☐ other: _____

*4. What are the various factors used to select the district's current upper elementary reading curricula?

Please drag and drop the factors in order from most important to least.

Most important factors for selection	Least important factors for selection
_____ alignment with Standard Course of Study	_____ alignment with Standard Course of Study
_____ evidence of scientifically-based reading instruction	_____ evidence of scientifically-based reading instruction
_____ alignment with phonics-based instruction	_____ alignment with phonics-based instruction
_____ familiarity and experience with publisher	_____ familiarity and experience with publisher
_____ alignment with explicit comprehension strategies	_____ alignment with explicit comprehension strategies
_____ fulfills requirement of Reading First text adoption	_____ fulfills requirement of Reading First text adoption
_____ integrates word study and phonics instruction	_____ integrates word study and phonics instruction
_____ alignment with balanced literacy approach	_____ alignment with balanced literacy approach

5. Is the elementary reading curricula typically adopted district-wide?

Yes

No

6. Did any of your elementary schools request textbook waivers during the last language arts/reading adoption?

Yes

No

*7. What types of materials did the school purchase with its waiver money?

Please check all that apply:

☐ guided reading leveled book sets

☐ science trade books

☐ social studies trade books

☐ science kits

☐ math trade books

☐ magazines

☐ classroom libraries

☐ other: _____

Reading Curricula: Past History and Present

8. How long has the district's current upper elementary reading curricula been in place?

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

6 years

7 years

More than 7 years

9. Does the district's current selection of upper elementary reading curricula materials represent a change in approach to reading instruction from the past years?

Yes

No

10. In what school year did this change occur?

- 2009-10
☐ 2008-09
☐ 2007-08
☐ 2006-07
☐ 2005-06
☐ 2004-05
☐ 2003-04
☐ 2002-03
☐ 2001-02

11. Has your district participated in any district-wide reform initiatives in recent years that might impact reading achievement in grades 3rd – 5th?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

12. Please briefly describe the focus and main components of this reform initiative in terms of its potential impact on reading achievement. (For example, the district adopted a new reading approach and/or funded classroom libraries for all elementary classrooms.)

*13. How would you describe the school district's current approach to upper elementary reading instruction?

Select no more than 2 approaches that best describe the district's current program:

- ☐ phonics-based instruction
☐ whole language instruction
☐ scientifically-based reading instruction
☐ direct instruction
☐ scripted program
☐ balanced literacy
☐ research-based instruction
☐ other: _____
☐ 90 minute literacy block

Reading Curricula: Content and Design

*14. Has the district implemented (through funding or requirements) book rooms or collections of multiple copies of leveled-books for elementary teachers to use in small group instruction?

- Yes
 No

*15. What other resources or organizations, beside NCDPI and your local Regional Educational Service Alliance, do you seek support from to boost upper elementary students' reading achievement?

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ local college/university
- ☐ textbook publisher
- ☐ Comprehensive School Reform
- ☐ Literacy Collaborative
- ☐ The Reading and Writing Project at Teacher's College in NYC (Lucy Calkins)
- ☐ educational consultants
- ☐ "Reading Lady" website
- ☐ literacy or reading coaches
- ☐ other _____

*16. What curricula materials are used in your district to teach upper elementary reading?

Please check all that apply:

Steck-Vaughn
 Open Court or SRA
 Fountas & Pinnell
 Scholastic Books
 Wright Group
 comprehension strategy guide books by either Stephanie Harvey, Ann Goudvis, Nancie Atwell, Lucy Calkins and/or Debbie Miller
 Six Traits of Reading
 Foundations of Reading
 Daily 5
 other: _____

*17. What are the main instructional components that form the district's approach to reading in 3rd-5th grades? *Please select the 5 most important components.*

guided reading instruction
 class novels
 classroom libraries
 90 minute literacy block
 leveled individual workbooks
 read aloud
 basal readers
 literacy centers
 Accelerated Reading (AR books)
 direct instruction
 Reading Workshop
 silent reading
 spelling contracts
 word work or word centers
 phonics-based instruction

*18. Does your district have a literacy framework, graphic organizer, brochure, or some other document that illustrates and describes the district's approach to elementary reading curricula?

☐ Yes

☐ No

19. What, if any, additional information do you want the researcher to know about your particular school district's elementary reading program?

Reading Curricula: Support Staff and Resources

20. Does your school district currently have a literacy coaching program in the elementary schools?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. Are you familiar with the basic design and approach of your district's literacy coach program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

22. Please list the name of the lead literacy coach or other knowledgeable contact person who can successfully complete the Literacy Coaching survey.

23. Please list the e-mail address for the lead literacy coach or other knowledgeable contact person who can successfully complete the Literacy Coaching survey.

Thank you for your help.

Your responses have been recorded for the Reading Curricula portion of this survey.

Please complete the Literacy Coaching section. Again, thank you for your input and time.

Good luck in the lottery!

APPENDIX B: Literacy Coaching Survey

Literacy Coaching Survey

Welcome to the Literacy Coaching Survey

This survey asks questions about your district's elementary literacy coach program. Literacy Coaching is a professional development model where teachers work with a staff person to develop their teaching practice and to implement instructional best practices. Your district may call this approach by a different name such as reading coach, instructional coach, or lead literacy teacher. Essentially, a literacy coach is a staff development person who works primarily with teachers, not students.

**Please answer the following questions with elementary schools in mind. Your honesty and insight is much appreciated. Thanks for your time!*

Participant Demographics

1. What is your current title?
2. How long have you been in this position?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1 year
 - 2 years
 - 3 years
 - 4 years
 - 5 years
 - 6 years
 - 7 years
 - 8 years
 - 9 years
 - 10 years
 - More than 10 years

3. How long have you been employed by this district?

Less than 1 year

1 Year

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

6 years

7 years

8 years

9 years

10 years

More than 10 years

Coaching Program: History and Purpose

4. What year did the district phase in or start the elementary literacy coach program?

☐ 2009-10

☐ 2008-09

☐ 2007-08

☐ 2006-07

☐ 2005-06

☐ 2004-06

☐ 2003-04

☐ 2002-03

☐ 2001-02

5. What was the first year that the literacy coach position(s) was staffed at its current level?

☐ 2009-10

☐ 2008-09

☐ 2007-08

☐ 2006-07

☐ 2005-06

☐ 2004-05

☐ 2003-04

☐ 2002-03

☐ 2001-02

6. Please select the 2 main reasons the district established the elementary literacy coaching program.

- ☐ in response to low achievement scores
- ☐ in response to superintendent initiative
- ☐ tied to Reading First grant
- ☐ connected to reading curricula initiative
- ☐ need for faculty development
- ☐ school improvement plan requirement

7. What are the current funding sources for your district's elementary literacy coach program? *Please select all that apply:*

- ☐ district budget
- ☐ school-based funds
- ☐ NC Reads (state funds)
- ☐ Reading First
- ☐ Title I
- ☐ other _____

Coaching Program: Intention

8. Does your district provide a description of the purpose or goal of its elementary coach program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. Is the elementary coaching program included in the district's strategic plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. Please rank the goals of the coaching program according to their levels of importance with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important.

- _____ improving student achievement
- _____ increasing teacher retention
- _____ improving teacher quality
- _____ creating in-house professional developers
- _____ monitoring and evaluating teacher growth
- _____ meeting requirement of federal grant

Coaching Program: Logistics

Please consider the basic structure and details of your district's current literacy coaching program to answer these questions.

11. How many literacy coaches (full or part-time) work in your district's elementary schools?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10
- ☐ 11
- ☐ 12
- ☐ 13
- ☐ More than 14

12. Are most literacy coaches assigned to a single school site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*13. What qualifications are required for the literacy coaches' employment?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ North Carolina Teaching License
- ☐ Doctorate
- ☐ Reading Certificate
- ☐ Masters Degree
- ☐ National Board Certification
- ☐ Reading Recovery Certificate
- ☐ at least 5 years teaching
- ☐ experience providing professional development
- ☐ mentoring experience
- ☐ other: _____

14. What title does your district use to identify the coaches who work on literacy in grades 3rd-5th?

- ☐ instructional coach
- ☐ literacy coach
- ☐ reading coach
- ☐ change coach
- ☐ other: _____

*15. Does the district provide opportunities for the literacy coaches to attend coach-specific professional development or certification opportunities?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

16. Approximately, how much time is allocated for coaches to receive training during the school year?

- ☐ half day
☐ 1 day
☐ 2 days
☐ 3 days
☐ 4 days
☐ 5 days
☐ 6 days
☐ more than a week

*17. Which 2 aspect(s) of reading instruction do the coaches emphasize the most while working with classroom teachers?

- ☐ fluency
☐ phonemic awareness
☐ phonics/word skills
☐ vocabulary
☐ comprehension
☐ other: _____

*18. Do the elementary literacy coaches ever meet as a group?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

*19. What is the typical purpose of these coach meetings?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ paperwork and scheduling
☐ developing coaching techniques
☐ problem solving
☐ planning future professional development sessions for teachers
☐ sharing resources
☐ other: _____

Coaching Program: Design

20. What is the most typical way that elementary teachers are matched with a literacy coach?

- ☐ principal assigns coach to teacher

- ☐ teacher requests coach
- ☐ coach assigned to entire grade level
- ☐ lead coach or curriculum director assigns coach
- ☐ other: _____

*21. On average, how many teachers are typically assigned to work with a full-time coach at one given time?

- ☐ 1 teacher
- ☐ 2 teachers
- ☐ 3 teachers
- ☐ 4 teachers
- ☐ 5 teachers
- ☐ 6 teachers
- ☐ 7 teachers
- ☐ 8 teachers
- ☐ 9 teachers
- ☐ 10 teachers or more

*22. Approximately, how long is a literacy coach assigned to work with a teacher?

- ☐ one day
- ☐ one week
- ☐ one month
- ☐ one quarter
- ☐ one school year
- ☐ other: _____

*23. Is the district's elementary literacy coaching program aligned with a particular model of coaching?

Yes

No

24. Please identify the particular model:

Reading First

Literacy Collaborative

other: _____

NCREADS

NC Teachers' Academy

25. What does the literacy coach do to implement the district's elementary reading program in schools? *Please select the 3 main tasks:*

- ☐ provide professional development
- ☐ model use of curriculum materials
- ☐ help teachers select curriculum materials
- ☐ disaggregate student data
- ☐ monitor implementation across classrooms
- ☐ evaluate teachers' use of program

*26. Do the coaches follow a prescribed cycle of interactions when working with teachers?

Yes

No

27. Please put the steps in order (1-7) describing the actions a coach typically takes when interacting with a teacher.

- _____ observation
- _____ feedback (written or verbal)
- _____ collaborative planning
- _____ analyze student data
- _____ reflection
- _____ pre-observation meeting
- _____ problem solving

*28. How often do the participating teachers meet as a group with the coach?

Never

less than once a month

once a month

once a quarter

other: _____

*29. What is the most typical format of these meetings?

grade level meeting

formal professional development in-service

study groups

other: _____

*30. What are the most typical activities during these meetings?

Please select all that apply:

- ☐ sharing curricula resources
- ☐ examining student data
- ☐ discussing common book
- ☐ co-planning
- ☐ modeling new instructional practices
- ☐ other: _____

Coach Program: Roles and Responsibilities

31. What are the basic duties of your district's elementary literacy coaches?

Please select all that apply:

- ☐ models instructional methods
- ☐ co-teaches with classroom teacher
- ☐ gathers teaching resources for classroom teacher
- ☐ tutors small groups of students
- ☐ assists administrator with observations
- ☐ assists administrator with evaluations
- ☐ attends professional development
- ☐ offers formal professional development sessions
- ☐ facilitates grade level meetings
- ☐ disaggregates student data
- ☐ performs diagnostic assessment of student readers
- ☐ attends grade level meetings
- ☐ models teacher reflection and self-assessment
- ☐ selects and purchases curricula resources
- ☐ conferring with teacher
- ☐ other: _____

*32. What are the main duties that occupy most of the coach's time?

Please select the 5 main duties.

- ☐ models instructional methods
- ☐ co-teaches with classroom teacher
- ☐ gathers teaching resources for classroom teacher
- ☐ tutors small groups of students
- ☐ assists administrator with observations
- ☐ assists administrator with evaluations
- ☐ attends professional development
- ☐ offers formal professional development sessions
- ☐ facilitates grade level meetings
- ☐ disaggregates student data
- ☐ performs diagnostic assessment of student readers
- ☐ attends grade level meetings
- ☐ models teacher reflection and self-assessment
- ☐ selects and purchases curricula resources
- ☐ conferring with teacher
- ☐ other: _____

*33. What percent of time does a literacy coach spend on the following activities during a typical week of work? *Please drag the item in to the appropriate box.*

Spend more than 50% of work week:	Spends between 25% to 49% of work week:	Spends less than 25% of work week:
_____ observing teachers	_____ observing teachers	_____ observing teachers
_____ assessing students	_____ assessing students	_____ assessing students
_____ co-teaching	_____ co-teaching	_____ co-teaching
_____ conferring with teacher	_____ conferring with teacher	_____ conferring with teacher
_____ completing paperwork	_____ completing paperwork	_____ completing paperwork
_____ planning for professional development presentations	_____ planning for professional development presentations	_____ planning for professional development presentations
_____ attending meetings	_____ attending meetings	_____ attending meetings

34. What are the ways that the coaches communicate with teachers?

Please select all that apply.

- ☐ e-mail
- ☐ sticky notes
- ☐ observation forms
- ☐ template feedback sheets
- ☐ regularly scheduled meetings
- ☐ informal check in or ad-hoc meetings
- ☐ phone
- ☐ other: _____

*35. Do coaches evaluate teachers for personnel purposes?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*36. Do coaches keep a log or record of how they spend their time?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

37. What are the logs or records used for?

Please check all that apply.

- ☐ coaches' reflections
- ☐ inventory services delivered
- ☐ teacher evaluation
- ☐ monitoring fidelity to curricula program
- ☐ research data
- ☐ other: _____

38. In your opinion, how have the coaches impacted student achievement in your district?
Remember that your comments will be held in confidence.

39. Have there been any reform initiatives, especially in professional development, in recent years that might impact teachers' reading instructional practices in grades 3rd-5th?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

40. Please briefly describe the reform initiative's goal and focus on professional development:

41. Do you have additional information you want the researcher to know about your school district's elementary coach program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please share any additional information or details that will help the researcher to understand your district's use of literacy coaches.

If you have completed the survey and are ready to exit, please select "Yes."

Thank you for your time and good luck in the lottery.

☐ Yes

APPENDIX C: Expert Panel Review E-mail Notification and Survey Link

Dear Expert Panel Review Member,

June 23, 2010

Thank you for your willingness to assist with this research project. After the piloting phase, the surveys will be distributed to all 115 N.C. school districts to gather data about the various reading curricula and literacy coach programs across the state. Again, thank you for your time and support of educational research. Please complete your tasks and return your work (either through email, fax, or mail), if possible, by Thursday, July 1st.

Your input will improve the design and content of these survey instruments. If you are not currently working in a school district, please use one you are familiar with to form your responses. As you take the survey, you will simultaneously align select survey items with a list of best practices (see directions below). The survey and alignment task will take approximately 45 minutes.

1. Please print and read the instructions in the attached *Expert Panel Review Ranking and Alignment Task* document. Have this two page document readily available (either print hardcopy or open on desktop) to consult and to record survey items during survey sessions. For the purpose of this piloting phase, I have assigned numbers to each question to make it easier for you to identify specific survey items during the alignment task. Do not be concerned if numbers appear out of order.

2. If you choose to print a hard copy of the *Expert Panel Review Ranking and Alignment Task*, scan the document and send to _____ or fax the paper document to (xxx) xxx-xxxx *Attention:*

3. Complete the attached *Pilot Feedback Questions* and e-mail or fax responses.

Again, thank you for your time and help. If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or

Click this link to open the survey:

[URL]

Take care,

APPENDIX D: Expert Panel Review Ranking and Alignment Task for Reading Curricula

Expert Panel Review Ranking and Alignment Task: *Reading Curricula Survey*

1. Using the list below, please rank the top 5 most important reading curricula best practices.
2. Take the survey, paying attention to any survey items with an asterisk*. Determine the best practice that aligns with this survey item and record the survey number below. Not every best practice will match a survey item and some survey items may align with more than one practice.

Select and rank <u>5</u> most important practices (1 being most important)	Reading Curricula Best Practices	Survey Item #'s
	Emphasizes quality literature	
	Uses student data to inform instruction	
	Access to leveled book collection	
	Includes variety of genres	
	Includes small group instruction	
	Includes 5 essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral reading skills, and reading comprehension strategies	
	Includes independent reading time	
	Includes explicit comprehension strategy lessons	
	Give students direct instruction in decoding to promote independent reading.	
	Balance direct instruction, guided instruction, and independent learning	
	Integrate a comprehensive word study/phonics program into reading/writing instruction	

Source: Compiled from *What is Evidence-based Reading Instruction?* Position Statement 2002, International Reading Association and National Reading Panel (2000)

APPENDIX E: Expert Panel Review Ranking and Alignment Task for Literacy Coaching

Expert Panel Review Ranking and Alignment Task: *Literacy Coaching Survey*

Follow the same instructions as previous alignment task sheet.

Select and rank <u>5</u> most important practices (1 being most important)	Coaching Best Practices	Survey Items #s
	intended purpose of program is stated and clear and guides program choices	
	clear understanding of role of student assessment	
	clear understanding/plan for how district will implement a literacy plan and/or core program	
	coach qualifications include knowledge about literacy development, experience with adult learners, experience in professional development	
	job-embedded, on-site professional development	
	coaches engage in their own professional learning opportunities	
	coaches meet together to support and strengthen the program	
	coaches receive district-wide support	
	literacy coaching issues come from instructional context and from communication between coach and teacher	
	frequent communication and feedback occurs between coach and teacher	
	coaches gather evidence of effectiveness and reflect (self-assessment rubrics, teacher feedback, coaching journals, logs)	

Source: Fisher (2007) *Coaching Considerations: FAQ's Useful in the Development of Literacy Coaching*

APPENDIX F: Pilot Feedback Questions

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate. The piloting phase provides an opportunity to detect and remedy a wide range of potential problems and to improve how the instrument is administered.

Please answer the following questions after completing the survey. Please submit electronically to _____ or use the self-addressed envelope that you received. Thank you for your time.

1. What problems, if any, did you have completing the instrument?

2. Are the directions clear?

3. Are there any words/language in the instrument that curriculum directors might not understand?

4. Were any questions too difficult to answer?

5. Did the answer choices allow you to answer as you intended?

6. Is there anything you would change about the instrument?

APPENDIX G: Thank You to Expert Panel Review Members

June 28, 2010

Dear Expert Panel Review Member,

Thank you for your help during the piloting phase of the *Reading Curricula Survey* and the *Literacy Coaching Survey*. Having worked in school systems as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, and reading consultant, I have witnessed the power of collaboration. I appreciate your willingness to participate. Your expertise and input is critical to the success of this research study funded by the X Family Fund through _____ University.

Again, thank you for your time and effort. I have enclosed a token of appreciation. Please contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to getting your feedback by July 1st.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX H: Pilot Member Invitation Letter with Lottery Ticket

July 2, 2010

Dear _____,

Dr. _____ passed along your contact information indicating your possible willingness to participate in the pilot phase of the *Reading Curricula Survey* and *Literacy Coach Survey*. I am a former elementary teacher and literacy coach focusing my doctoral research on reading curricula, literacy coaching, and student reading achievement in North Carolina elementary schools. This research is funded with support from the X Family Fund and is based at _____ University. Your insight and comments will improve the design and content of the survey.

Your responsibility as a pilot participant should take no more than 40 minutes and involves completing electronic survey(s) and a brief feedback questionnaire. (There will be no meetings!) The week of July 5th, I will e-mail a link to the online survey. After one week, I will e-mail the survey link again, requesting that you please complete the survey(s) a second time in order to help validate the survey instrument. You will not need to complete the feedback questionnaire twice. The enclosed lottery ticket is offered as a small token of appreciation for your time and participation.

I understand that your summer work schedule may delay your response, but I hope that you can complete the first round of the survey(s) and mail the completed *Pilot Feedback Questionnaire* by July 14th. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at _____ or (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Again, thank you for your support of educational research.

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX I: Pilot Member E-mail Notification and Survey Link

Dear Ms. ,

July 8, 2010

Earlier this week you received a letter thanking you for your willingness to participate in the piloting phase of the *Reading Curricula and Literacy Coach Survey*. Your input will improve the design and content of this research instrument. After the piloting phase, the survey will be distributed to all 115 North Carolina school districts to gather data about the various reading curricula and literacy coach programs across the state. (Please complete the survey even if your district does not have a literacy coach program.)

Your responsibility as a pilot participant includes completing the electronic survey and the Pilot Feedback Questionnaire. You may complete the paper copy of the questionnaire and use the self-addressed stamped envelope, enclosed with the introductory letter and lottery ticket, or simply complete the attached electronic document and submit it through e-mail. ***After one week I will e-mail the survey link again, requesting that you please complete the survey a second time in order to help validate the survey instrument. You will not need to complete the feedback questionnaire again.***

Your participation in this pilot process is entirely voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. You have a right to skip questions and stop participation at any time. There are no foreseeable risks for participation. The entire process should take approximately 35 minutes. (When ready, scroll down for survey link.)

Your summer work schedule may delay your response, but I hope that you can complete the first round of the survey and Pilot Feedback Questionnaire by July 15th. I appreciate your time and consideration in completing the survey. It is only through the help of educational leaders like you that we can learn more about instructional practices that contribute to student achievement.

The faculty advisor and Foundations can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. This study has been reviewed and approved by the University's Institutional Review Board for human subject participation. You may contact the Institutional Review Board at the following address and telephone number at any time during this study should you feel your rights have been violated:

Chairperson, Institutional Review Board
c/o Research Administration

Please click the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the survey link in to your Internet browser).

Survey link:

[URL]

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at or (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Again, thank you for your support of educational research.

Many thanks,

APPENDIX J: Participant Invitation Letter with Lottery Ticket

July 23, 2010

Dear Ms. _____,

You were identified as a person knowledgeable about your district's elementary reading curriculum. As a former elementary teacher, literacy coach, and a current doctoral student, I invite you to participate in an educational research study focusing on reading curricula, literacy coaching and student reading achievement. Currently, no study exists about these issues in North Carolina. This research is funded with support from the X Family Fund and is based at _____ University. With full participation, the research promises to benefit future decision-making about models for professional development and curriculum.

The *Reading Curricula Survey* and *Literacy Coach Survey* include questions and answer choices that seek to best describe your district's elementary reading program/approach, and, if applicable, your district's use of elementary literacy coaches. This data will be analyzed with responses from the other districts in the state. No school district will be individually identified when reporting the findings. Your input is critical to having a complete and accurate catalogue of these programs.

In the following week, you will receive an e-mail message with a link to the *Reading Curricula and Literacy Coach Survey*. The survey(s) take approximately twenty minutes to complete. The window for collecting data will be from July 29th - August 12th. I understand that your time is precious; the enclosed educational lottery ticket is offered as a small token of appreciation for your participation.

Should you have any further questions or comments or wish to receive a summary of the results, please feel free to contact me at _____
Thank you very much for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX K: Participant Notification E-mail and Survey Link

Dear Elementary Curriculum Expert,

August 1, 2010

Recently you received an invitation to complete the ***Reading Curricula/Literacy Coach Survey***. This survey will collect information about the various elementary reading curricula and literacy coach programs across North Carolina. You have been selected because you are in a unique position to share information about reading curricula and literacy coaching being implemented in your district's elementary schools. *(Please complete the survey even if your district does not have a literacy coach program or you are not the coach coordinator.)*

This is a short survey and should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. The window for collecting data will be from July 30th - August 20th. Please click the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the survey link into your Internet browser).

Survey link: [URL]

Your participation is entirely voluntary and all responses will be kept confidential. No district will be identified individually when reporting the findings. You have the right to skip questions and stop at any time. There are no foreseeable risks for participation.

The faculty advisor, _____ can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or _____. This study has been reviewed and approved by _____ University's Institutional Review Board for human subject participation. You may contact the WCU Institutional Review Board at the following address and telephone number at any time during this study should you feel your rights have been violated:

Chairperson, Institutional Review Board
c/o Research Administration
Office of Research and Graduate Studies

Should you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at. I appreciate your time and consideration in completing the survey. It is only through the help of educational leaders like you that we can learn more about instructional practices and their contribution to student achievement.

Many thanks,

APPENDIX L: Thank You E-mail and Gentle Reminder

Dear Curriculum Director,

August 20, 2010

The deadline for the *Reading Curricula and Literacy Coach Survey* is extended until September 1st.

(If you completed the survey, thank you for contributing during the initial data collection phase.)

I realize your time is precious as schools starts up. I hope the extension of the deadline will allow you to participate. Your input is critical in order to determine the variety of programs elementary readers are encountering across North Carolina. ***Most response times are averaging 10 minutes, which means this task will take less time than the 20 minutes described in your letter with the lottery ticket.***

Your opinion and perspective as an educational leader are critical to the success of this research effort.

Please follow the link below to participate in this statewide research project.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[URL]

Should you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at

Again, I appreciate your time in completing the survey.

Many thanks,

APPENDIX M: Final Plea

Dear Curriculum Director,

September 13, 2010

I hope that your school year has started off with success. As you prepare your "to do" list for this week, please consider helping a colleague by taking a moment to respond to this final request to complete the Reading Curricula survey. ***The overall success of my doctoral work and dissertation relies, in part, on the response rates from this survey.*** For those of you who have completed the survey, thank you for your generosity and time.

Your opinion and perspective as an educational leader are critical to the success of this research effort.

Please follow the link below to participate in this statewide research project.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[URL]

Should you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at . Again, I appreciate your time in completing the survey.

Many thanks,

APPENDIX N: Reading Curricula Model Classification Matrix

Survey Item Qualifiers:	Response items indicating “balanced” curricula model:	Response items indicating “core-based” curricula model:
Q4: factors for selection	4_8 alignment with balanced literacy and 4_5 alignment with comprehension or 4_7 integrates word study and phonics	4_2 SBRI or 4_3 alignment with phonics-based instruction or 4_6 fulfills Reading First requirement
Q13: select 2 descriptors for district’s approach to RC	13_6 balanced literacy	13_4 direct instruction or 13_5 scripted or 13_1 phonics-based instruction
Q16: curricula materials used	16_3 Fountas & Pinnell or 16_6 comprehension strategy guide books	16_1 Steck-Vaughn or 16_2 Open Court/SRA or 16_9 textbooks listed or 16_8 Foundations of Reading
Q17: 5 most important instructional components	17_1 guided reading or 17_11 Reading Workshop and 17_3 classroom libraries or 17_4 90 minute literacy block or 17_6 read aloud	17_5 individual workbooks or 17_7 basal readers or 17_9 AR books or 17_10 Direct Instruction or 17_15 Phonics-based instruction
Clarifying Variable Q6: Did the district request and use a textbook waiver?	6_1 yes	6_2 no
Equations for Selection	$Q4_8 = 1 + (Q4_5 = 1 \mid Q4_7 = 1) + Q13_6 = 1 + (Q16_3 = 1 \mid Q16_6 = 1) + (Q17_1 = 1 \mid Q17_11 = 1) + (Q17_3 = 1 \mid Q17_4 = 1 \mid Q17_6 = 1)$	$(Q4_2 = 1 \mid Q4_3 = 1 \mid Q4_6 = 1) + (Q13_4 = 1 \mid Q13_5 = 1 \mid Q13_1 = 1) + (Q16_1 = 1 \mid Q16_2 = 1 \mid Q16_9_other = 1 \mid Q16_8 = 1) + (Q17_5 = 1 \mid Q17_7 = 1 \mid Q17_9 = 1 \mid Q17_10 = 1 \mid Q17_15 = 1)$

If a district’s response did not fit in either category, then the district was classified as “unknown.”

APPENDIX O: Literacy Coaching Model Classification Matrix

Survey Item Qualifiers:	Response items indicating “responsive” coaching model:	Response items indicating “directive” coaching model:
Q6: reason established	6_1 in response to low achievement scores or 6_4 in-house PD or 6_5 need for faculty development	6_2 in response to superintendent initiative or 6_3 tied to Reading First grant or 6_6 connected to reading curricula initiative
Q10: rank goals of LC program according to importance	10_1 improving student achievement or 10_3 improving teacher quality	10_5 monitoring and evaluating teacher growth or 10_6 meeting federal grant requirements
Q32: LC’s 5 main duties	32_1 models instructional methods 32_2 co-teaches with classroom teacher 32_12 attends grade level meetings 32_13 models teacher reflection/self-assessment 32_15 confers with teacher	32_5 assists administrators with observations 32_8 offers formal pd sessions 32_9 facilitates grade level meetings
Q25: ways LC implements district’s RC	25_2 models use of curriculum materials 25_3 helps teachers select curricula materials	25_5 monitor implementation across classrooms 25_6 evaluate teachers’ use of program
Clarifying Variable Q24: identify particular model	24_2 Literacy Collaborative or 24_3 other (Cognitive Coaching)	24_1 Reading First or 24_4 NCREADS or 24_0 (none selected)
Equations for selection	$(Q6_1 = 1 \mid Q6_5 = 1 \mid Q6_4 = 1) + (Q10_1\text{revised} = 1 \mid Q10_3\text{revised} = 1) + (Q32_1 = 1 \mid Q32_2 = 1 \mid Q32_12 = 1 \mid Q32_13 = 1 \mid Q32_15 = 1) + (Q25_2 = 1 \mid Q25_3 = 1)$	$(Q6_2 = 1 \mid Q6_3 = 1 \mid Q6_6 = 1) + Q10_5\text{revised} = 2 + (Q24 = 1 \mid Q24 = 4 \mid Q24 = 0) + (Q32_5 = 1 \mid Q32_8 = 1 \mid Q32_9 = 1) + (Q25_1 = 1 \mid Q25_5 = 1 \mid Q25_6 = 1)$

If a district’s response did not fit in either category, then the district was classified as “unknown.”

APPENDIX P: Elements of Best Practice for Reading Curricula

Element One: Includes 5 essential components of reading instruction

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#4 (3) Group and rank factors used to select RC by importance	*5 alignment with explicit comprehension strategies *7 integrates word study/phonics instruction *8 alignment with BL approach	
#6 Did district use of textbook waiver?	*yes	
#12 (4) Describe components of reform initiative	*text responses that represent BP include key terms such as: Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, Reading Workshop, Integration, continuum of text levels (not including Reading Foundations, RTI, Reading First, or Benchmark assessments)	
#13 (2) Select one or two approaches to describe RC	*not counting combinations with *1 phonics, *4 direct instruction or *5 scripted do count *3 SBRI or *7 Research-based if combined with BL and finally count *6 BL	
#14 Did district implemented book room?	*yes	
#15 (2) Select all that apply for outside resources	*4 Literacy Collaborative *5 Writing/Reading Project Teachers' College	
#16 Select all that apply for curricula materials used	*3 Fountas & Pinnell *6 comprehension books *7 Six Traits of Reading *4 Scholastic Books (maybe?) not: *1 Steck-Vaughn, *2 Open Court, *other: textbook companies	
#17 Pick 5 most imp. main instructional components	*1 GR *3 classroom libraries	

	*6 read aloud *11 Reading Workshop *14 word work or word centers NOT: *7 basal readers *9 AR *10 direct instruction *15 phonics based instruction (primary, not elem.)	
#18 Does district have a literacy framework?	*yes	

Element Two: Emphasizes quality literature (4)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#4 (3) Factors used to select RC	*5 alignment with explicit comprehension strategies *7 integrates word study/phonics instruction *8 alignment with BL approach	
#6 (2) request textbook waivers	*yes	
#12 (2) Describe components of reform initiative	*text responses that represent BP include key terms Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, Reading Workshop, Integration, continuum of text levels (not including Reading Foundations, RTI, Reading First, or Benchmark assessments)	
#14 (2) Implemented book rooms		
#15 (2) outside resources used	*4 Literacy Collaborative *5 Writing/Reading Project Teachers' College	
#16 curricula materials used	*3 Fountas & Pinnell *6 comprehension books *7 Six Traits of Reading *4 Scholastic Books (maybe?) not: *1 Steck-Vaughn, *2 Open Court, *other: textbook companies	
#17 main instructional components	*1 GR *3 classroom libraries *6 read aloud *11 Reading Workshop *14 word work or word centers NOT: *7 basal readers *9 AR *10 direct instruction *15 phonics based instruction	
#18 district has literacy framework	yes	

Element Three: Uses student data to inform instruction (1,1,1,2)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#12 Describe components of reform initiative	*text responses that represent BP include key terms Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, Reading Workshop, Integration, continuum of text levels (not including Reading Foundations, RTI, Reading First, or Benchmark assessments)	
#13 Select 2 approaches to describe RC	*not counting combinations with *1 phonics, *4 direct instruction or *5 scripted in answer choices *3 SBRI or *7 Research-based combined with BL *6 BL	
#14 (2) Implemented book rooms	*yes	
#15 (2) outside resources used	*4 Literacy Collaborative *5 Writing/Reading Project Teachers' College	
#17 main instructional components	*1GR *3 classroom libraries *6 read aloud *11 Reading Workshop *14 word work or word centers NOT: *7 basal readers *9 AR *10 direct instruction *15 phonics based instruction	
#18 district has literacy framework	yes	

Element Four: Access to leveled book collection (5)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#4 (2) Factors use to select RC	*5 alignment with explicit comprehension strategies *7 integrates word study/phonics instruction *8 alignment with BL approach	
#6 (2) request textbook waivers	yes	
#12 Describe components of reform initiative	*text responses that represent BP include key terms Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, Reading Workshop, Integration, continuum of text levels (not including Reading Foundations, RTI, Reading First, or Benchmark assessments)	
#13 Select 2 approaches to describe RC	*not counting combinations with *1 phonics, *4 direct instruction or *5 scripted in answer choices *3 SBRI or *7 Research-based combined with BL *6 BL	
#15 (2) outside resources used	*4 Literacy Collaborative *5 Writing/Reading Project Teachers' College	
#16 curricula materials used	*3 Fountas & Pinnell *6 comprehension books *7 Six Traits of Reading *4 Scholastic Books (maybe?) not: *1 Steck-Vaughn, *2 Open Court, *other: textbook companies	

Element Five: Includes variety of genres (2,5,2)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#4 (2) Factors use to select RC	*5 alignment with explicit comprehension strategies *7 integrates word study/phonics instruction *8 alignment with BL approach	
#6 (2) request textbook waivers	yes	
#16 curricula materials used	*3 Fountas & Pinnell *6 comprehension books *7 Six Traits of Reading *4 Scholastic Books (maybe?) not: *1 Steck-Vaughn, *2 Open Court, *other: textbook companies	
#17 main instructional components	*1 GR *3 classroom libraries *6 read aloud *11 Reading Workshop *14 word work or word centers NOT: *7 basal readers *9 AR *10 direct instruction *15 phonics based instruction	
#18 district has literacy framework	yes	

Element Six: Includes independent reading time (5)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#4 (2) Factors use to select RC	*5 alignment with explicit comprehension strategies *7 integrates word study/phonics instruction *8 alignment with BL approach	
#12 Describe components of reform initiative	*text responses that represent BP include key terms Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, Reading Workshop, Integration, continuum of text levels (not including Reading Foundations, RTI, Reading First, or Benchmark assessments)	
#13 Select 2 approaches to describe RC	* not counting combinations with *1 phonics, *4 direct instruction or *5 scripted in answer choices *3 SBRI or *7 Research-based combined with BL *6 BL	
#14 (2) Implemented book rooms	*yes	
#16 curricula materials used	*3 Fountas & Pinnell *6 comprehension books *7 Six Traits of Reading *4 Scholastic Books (maybe?) not: *1 Steck-Vaughn, *2 Open Court, *other: textbook companies	
#17 main instructional components	*1 GR *3 classroom libraries *6 read aloud *11 Reading Workshop *14 word work or word centers NOT: *7 basal readers *9 AR *10 direct instruction *15 phonics based instruction	
#18 district has literacy framework	yes	

Element Seven: Includes explicit comprehension strategy lessons (3,4,4,)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#4 (2) Factors use to select RC	*5 alignment with explicit comprehension strategies *7 integrates word study/phonics instruction *8 alignment with BL approach	
#6 (2) request textbook waivers	yes	
#12 Describe components of reform initiative	*text responses that represent BP include key terms Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, Reading Workshop, Integration, continuum of text levels (not including Reading Foundations, RTI, Reading First, or Benchmark assessments)	
#14 (2) Implemented book rooms	*yes	
#15 (2) outside resources used	*4 Literacy Collaborative *5 Writing/Reading Project Teachers' College	
#16 curricula materials used	*3 Fountas & Pinnell *6 comprehension books *7 Six Traits of Reading *4 Scholastic Books (maybe?) not: *1 Steck-Vaughn, *2 Open Court, *other: textbook companies	
#17 main instructional components	*1 GR *3 classroom libraries *6 read aloud *11 Reading Workshop *14 word work or word centers NOT: *7 basal readers *9 AR *10 direct instruction *15 phonics based instruction	
#18 district has literacy framework	yes	

Element Eight: Balance direct instruction, guided instruction,
and independent learning (4,2,3,3)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#4 (2) Factors use to select RC	*5 alignment with explicit comprehension strategies *7 integrates word study/phonics instruction *8 alignment with BL approach	
#6 (2) request textbook waivers	yes	
#12 Describe components of reform initiative	*text responses that represent BP include key terms Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, Reading Workshop, Integration, continuum of text levels (not including Reading Foundations, RTI, Reading First, or Benchmark assessments)	
#13 Select 2 approaches to describe RC	*not counting combinations with *1 phonics, *4 direct instruction or *5 scripted in answer choices *3 SBRI or *7 Research-based combined with BL *6 BL	
#14 (2) Implemented book rooms	*yes	
#15 (2) outside resources used	*4 Literacy Collaborative *5 Writing/Reading Project Teachers' College	
#16 curricula materials used	*3 Fountas & Pinnell *6 comprehension books *7 Six Traits of Reading *4 Scholastic Books (maybe?) not: *1 Steck-Vaughn, *2 Open Court, *other: textbook companies	
#17 main instructional components	*1 GR *3 classroom libraries *6 read aloud *11 Reading Workshop *14 word work or word centers NOT: *7 basal readers	

	*9 AR *10 direct instruction *15 phonics based instruction	
#18 district has literacy framework	yes	

Element Nine: Integrate a comprehensive word study/phonics program into reading/writing instruction (3, 5)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#4 (2) Factors use to select RC	*5 alignment with explicit comprehension strategies *7 integrates word study/phonics instruction *8 alignment with BL approach	
#6 (2) request textbook waivers	yes	
#12 Describe components of reform initiative	*text responses that represent BP include key terms Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, Reading Workshop, Integration, continuum of text levels (not including Reading Foundations, RTI, Reading First, or Benchmark assessments)	
#13 Select 2 approaches to describe RC	*not counting combinations with *1 phonics, *4 direct instruction or *5 scripted in answer choices *3 SBRI or *7 Research-based combined with BL *6 BL	
#14 (2) Implemented book rooms	*yes	
#15 (2) outside resources used	*4 Literacy Collaborative *5 Writing/Reading Project Teachers' College	
#16 curricula materials used	*3 Fountas & Pinnell *6 comprehension books *7 Six Traits of Reading *4 Scholastic Books (maybe?) not: *1 Steck-Vaughn, *2 Open Court, *other: textbook companies	
#18 district has literacy framework	yes	

Source: Compiled from *What is Evidence-based Reading Instruction?*, Position Statement 2002, International Reading Association and National Reading Panel (2000)

APPENDIX Q: Elements of Best Practice for Literacy Coaching

Element One: clear understanding of role of student assessment (4)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 select 2 main reasons district established the LC program	1. in response to low achievement scores 2. in response to superintendent initiative 3. tied to Reading First grant 4. connected to reading curricula initiative 5. need for faculty development 6. school improvement requirement	
#24 Identify particular model your district is aligned with	2. literacy collaborative 3. other: Cognitive Coaching 4. NCREADS	
#25 what 3 main tasks LC does to implement district's RC	1. provide pd 2. model use of curricula 3. help teachers select materials 4. disaggregate data 5. monitor implementation	
#26 LC follow prescribed cycle of interaction	yes	
#30 most typical activities during LC and teacher mtgs.	1. sharing curricula 2. examining student data 3. common book 4. co-planning 5. modeling new practices 6. other (aligning)	
#33 main 5 duties occupy most time	1. models instructional methods 2. co-teaches 3. gather resources 8. offers PD sessions 10. disaggregates student data 13. models reflection 15. conferring with teachers	
#38 in opinion, how have LC impacted reading achievement (text)	key words include: sustain and develop vision, offer constructive criticism, coaches	

	as support not leaders, monitoring implementation	
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Element Two: clear understanding/plan for how district will implement a literacy plan and/or core program (1, 1)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 select 2 main reasons district established the LC program	1. in response to low achievement scores 2. in response to superintendent initiative 3. tied to Reading First grant 4. connected to reading curricula initiative 5. need for faculty development 6. school improvement requirement	
#8 does your district provide a description of the LC program	yes	
#10 rank goals of LC program according to importance	1. improving student achievement 3. improving teacher quality 4. creating in-house professional developers	
#24 identify particular model	2. literacy collaborative 3. other: Cognitive Coaching 4. NCREADS	
#25 what 3 main tasks does LC do to implement district's RC	1. provide pd 2. model use of curricula 3. help teachers select materials 4. disaggregate data 5. monitor implementation NOT evaluate teachers' use of program?	
#30 most typical activities during LC and teacher mtgs.	1. sharing curricula 2. examining student data 3. common book 4. co-planning 5. modeling new practices 6. other (aligning)	

#32 main 5 duties occupy most time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. models instructional methods 2. co-teaches 3. gather resources 8. offers PD sessions 9. facilitates grade level meetings 10. disaggregates student data 13. models reflection and self-assessment 15. conferring with teachers 	
#33 what percent of time does LC spend most time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. observing teachers 3. co-teaching 4. conferring with teachers 6. planning for PD sessions 	
#38 in opinion, how have LC impacted reading achievement (text)	key words include: sustain and develop vision, offer constructive criticism, coaches as support not leaders, monitoring implementation	

Element Three: coach qualifications include knowledge about literacy development, experience with adult learners, experience in professional development (3, 5, 2)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 select 2 main reasons district established the elem. LC program	1. in response to low achievement scores 2. in response to superintendent initiative 3. tied to Reading First grant 4. connected to reading curricula initiative 5. need for faculty development 6. school improvement requirement	
#8 Does your district provide a description of the purpose or goal of its elementary coach program?	yes	
#12 Are most literacy coaches assigned to a single school site?	yes	
#13 What qualifications are required for LC's employment	1. North Carolina teaching license 3. reading certificate 6. Reading Recovery certificate 8. experience providing PD 9. mentoring experience	
#17 which 2 aspects of reading instruction do coaches emphasize while working with classroom teachers	1. fluency 5. comprehension other: differentiation, strategies, BL, all of the big ideas,	
#34 ways coach communicates with teachers	all choices	

Element Four: job-embedded, on-site professional development for teachers and coaches
(3)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 district provides purpose/goal of program	yes	
#8 Does your district provide a description of the purpose or goal of its elementary coach program?	yes	
#15 do LC attend PD	yes	
#16 how much time allocated to LC for PD	8. more than a week	
#18 do LC ever meet as a group	yes	
#19 typical purpose of coach meetings	2. developing coaching techniques 3. problem solving 4. planning future PD 5. sharing resources 6. other: all responses	
#25 what 3 main tasks does LC do to implement district's RC	1. provide pd 2. model use of curricula 3. help teachers select materials 4. disaggregate data 5. monitor implementation NOT evaluate teachers' use of program?	
#28 how often do the participating teachers meet as a group with coach	3. monthly 5. other: all choices	
#29 typical format	1. grade level 3. study groups 4. other: all choices	
#30 most typical activities during LC and teacher mtgs.	1. sharing curricula 2. examining student data 3. common book 4. co-planning 5. modeling new practices 6. other (aligning)	
#33 what percent of time does LC spend most time	1. observing teachers 3. co-teaching 4. conferring with teachers 6. planning for PD sessions	
#34 how does coach communicate	all choices	
#37 what are logs used for	1. coach reflections	

	4. monitoring fidelity 5. research data	
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Element Five: coaches meet together to support and strengthen the program (4)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 district provides purpose/goal of program	yes	
#18 do LC ever meet as a group	yes	
#19 typical purpose of coach meetings	2. developing coaching techniques 3. problem solving 4. planning future PD 5. sharing resources 6. other: all responses	
#33 what percent of time does LC spend most time	1. observing teachers 3. co-teaching 4. conferring with teachers 6. planning for PD sessions	
#36 do coaches keep a log	yes	
#37 what are logs used for	1. coach reflections 4. monitoring fidelity 5. research data	

Element Six: coaches receive district-wide support (1,4)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 district provides purpose/goal of program	yes	
#15 do LC attend PD	yes	
#16 how much time allocated to LC for PD	8. more than a week	
#18 do LC ever meet as a group	yes	
#19 typical purpose of coach meetings	2. developing coaching techniques 3. problem solving 4. planning future PD 5. sharing resources 6. other: all responses	
#22 how long is LC assigned to work with a teacher	1. school year 6. other: all answers	

Element Seven: literacy coaching issues come from instructional context and from communication between coach and teacher (5)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 (2) district provides purpose/goal of program	yes	
#10 rank goals of LC program according to importance	1. improving student achievement 3. improving teacher quality 4. creating in-house professional developers	
#16 how much time allocated to LC for PD	8. more than a week	
#17 2 aspects of reading instruction coaches emphasize with classroom teachers	1. fluency 4. vocabulary 5. comprehension	
#18 do LC ever meet as a group	yes	
#19 typical purpose of coach meetings	2. developing coaching techniques 3. problem solving 4. planning future PD 5. sharing resources 6. other: all responses	
#22 how long is LC assigned to work with a teacher	1. school year 6. other: all answers	
#25 what 3 main tasks does LC do to implement district's RC	1. provide pd 2. model use of curricula 3. help teachers select materials 4. disaggregate data 5. monitor implementation NOT evaluate teachers' use of program?	
#26 do LC follow prescribed cycle of interactions	yes	
#28 how often do the participating teachers meet as a group with coach	3. monthly 5. other: all choices	
#31 basic duties of LC	1. models instructional methods 2. co-teachers with teacher 3. gathers classroom resources 7. attends PD 8. offers PD	

	9. facilitates grade level meetings 10. disaggregates student data 13. models teacher reflection 15. conferring with teachers	
#32 main 5 duties occupy most time	1. models instructional methods 2. co-teaches 3. gather resources 8. offers PD sessions 9. facilitates grade level meetings 10. disaggregates student data 13. models reflection and self-assessment 15. conferring with teachers	
#33 what percent of time does LC spend most time	1. observing teachers 3. co-teaching 4. conferring with teachers 6. planning for PD sessions	
#34 how does coach communicate	all choices	
#35 do coaches evaluate teachers for personnel purposes	no	

Element Eight: frequent communication and feedback occurs between coach and teacher
(2, 2)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 district provides purpose/goal of program	yes	
#10 rank goals of LC program according to importance	1. improving student achievement 3. improving teacher quality 4. creating in-house professional developers	
#17 2 aspects of reading instruction coaches emphasize with classroom teachers	1. fluency 4. vocabulary 5. comprehension	
#22 how long is LC assigned to work with a teacher	1. school year 6. other: all answers	
#25 what 3 main tasks does LC do to implement district's RC	1. provide pd 2. model use of curricula 3. help teachers select materials 4. disaggregate data 5. monitor implementation NOT evaluate teachers' use of program?	
#26 do LC follow prescribed cycle of interactions	yes	
#28 how often do the participating teachers meet as a group with coach	3. monthly 5. other: all choices	
#30 most typical activities during LC and teacher mtgs.	1. sharing curricula 2. examining student data 3. common book 4. co-planning 5. modeling new practices 6. other (aligning)	
#31 basic duties of LC	1. models instructional methods 2. co-teachers with teacher 3. gathers classroom resources 7. attends PD 8. offers PD 9. facilitates grade level meetings 10. disaggregates student data 13. models teacher reflection	

	15. conferring with teachers	
#32 main 5 duties occupy most time	1. models instructional methods 2. co-teaches 3. gather resources 8. offers PD sessions 9. facilitates grade level meetings 10. disaggregates student data 13. models reflection and self-assessment 15. conferring with teachers	
#33 what percent of time does LC spend most time	1. observing teachers 3. co-teaching 4. conferring with teachers 6. planning for PD sessions	
#34 how does coach communicate with teachers	all choices	
#36 do coaches keep logs	yes	
#37 what are logs used for	1. coach reflections 4. monitoring fidelity 5. research data	

Element Nine: coaches gather evidence of effectiveness and reflect using self-assessment rubrics, teacher feedback, coaching logs (3, 5)

Weighted Survey Item	Embedded BP Answer Choice	+1 Points
#6 (2) district provides purpose/goal of program	yes	
#8 (2)		
#10 rank goals of LC program according to importance	1. improving student achievement 3. improving teacher quality 4. creating in-house professional developers	
#12 Are most literacy coaches assigned to a single school site?	yes	
#17 2 aspects of reading instruction coaches emphasize with classroom teachers	1. fluency 4. vocabulary 5. comprehension	
#22 how long is LC assigned to work with a teacher	1. school year 6. other: all answers	
#25 what 3 main tasks does LC do to implement district's RC	1. provide pd 2. model use of curricula 3. help teachers select materials 4. disaggregate data 5. monitor implementation NOT evaluate teachers' use of program?	
#26 do LC follow prescribed cycle of interactions	yes	
#28 how often do the participating teachers meet as a group with coach	3. monthly 5. other: all choices	
#30 most typical activities during LC and teacher mtgs.	1. sharing curricula 2. examining student data 3. common book 4. co-planning 5. modeling new practices 6. other (aligning)	
#31 basic duties of LC	1. models instructional methods 2. co-teachers with teacher 3. gathers classroom resources 7. attends PD	

	8. offers PD 9. facilitates grade level meetings 10. disaggregates student data 13. models teacher reflection 15. conferring with teachers	
#32 main 5 duties occupy most time	1. models instructional methods 2. co-teaches 3. gather resources 8. offers PD sessions 9. facilitates grade level meetings 10. disaggregates student data 13. models reflection and self-assessment 15. conferring with teachers	
#32 main 5 duties occupy most time continued...		
#33 what percent of time does LC spend most time	1. observing teachers 3. co-teaching 4. conferring with teachers 6. planning for PD sessions	
#34 how does coach communicate with teachers	all choices	
#36 do coaches keep logs	yes	
#37 what are logs used for	1. coach reflections 4. monitoring fidelity 5. research data	

Fisher (2007) *Coaching Considerations: FAQ's Useful in the Development of Literacy Coaching*

APPENDIX R: State Board of Education Regions

County Locations of City School Units

CITY UNIT	COUNTY
1) Asheboro	Randolph
2) Asheville	Buncombe
3) Chapel Hill/Carrboro	Orange
4) Clinton	Sampson
5) Elkin	Surry
6) Hickory	Catawba
7) Kannapolis	Cabarrus
8) Lexington	Davidson
9) Mooresville	Iredell
10) Mount Airy	Surry
11) Newton-Conover	Catawba
12) Roanoke Rapids	Halifax
13) Thomasville	Davidson
14) Weldon	Halifax
15) Whiteville	Columbus

